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15 March 2013

Mr K Cox  
Headteacher  
Grange School  
Matthews Lane  
Longsight  
Manchester  
M12 4GR

Dear Mr Cox

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Grange School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, six members of the Governing Body, and the lead officer for special educational needs within the local authority. The inspector also met with the National Leader in Education who is the headteacher of the National Support School commissioned by the local authority to provide support for the school. The school action plan was evaluated. The inspector met with members of the school council and accompanied the headteacher on a tour of the school, visiting all the classes.

**Context**

The school is currently restructuring its leadership team to reflect the school's new priorities.

## Main findings

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The process of eradicating inadequate teaching and building on existing good practice is well underway. Senior staff and those external partners supporting the improvement of teaching quality are confident that consistently good teaching will be achieved by the end of the summer term, 2013. Progress has been made towards implementing an assessment procedure, for use by all teachers, aimed at improving the measurement of even the smallest steps in pupils' learning. Improved assessment supports the teachers' already-improved lesson plans. As confidence grows, improvements in teaching are increasingly the result of teachers sharing good practice and supporting each other, rather than relying on external support.

There are plans of good quality in place to support the school in developing the curriculum as the next step on its journey to becoming a good school. Curriculum development is required to meet the very varied needs of pupils with the school. Although this is a new school, built to a high standard, there is recognition that further development of the learning environment is desirable; for example, in the outdoor areas. This further development is underway. In particular, there is an urgent need to provide wireless connections for electronic communication devices.

The school is more unified than at the time of the recent inspection. This is well illustrated within the school council, where representatives act in the interests of all pupils. It is also demonstrated in the staff's willingness to engage in joint professional development. The re-structuring of the leadership team and the devolvement of leadership at all levels, with whole-school rather than departmental responsibilities, are aimed, partly, at further unifying the school.

The headteacher has recognised the need for an improved knowledge and understanding of autism within the staff. This is required if the school is to realise the local authority's aim of it becoming a centre of excellence and the hub for all its provision for autism within Manchester schools. The recognition provides evidence that the clarity of vision and direction for the school, noted within the recent section 5 inspection report, is being sustained. The vision is ambitious and comprehensive and fully supported by the governing body and the local authority. The school is keen to develop its presence within the local community. It is developing the community use of its facilities. It plans to take its pupils out into the community more and invite pupils from other schools into the Grange.

Governors are much more involved in monitoring the development of the school. The governing body has a broader range of skills to call on within its membership; it meets more frequently; and, the information it receives is of improved quality and quantity. It is, therefore, better placed to support and challenge senior leaders.

Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- Explicitly include the impact on pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school when evaluating the success of the school's action plan.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing effective support for the school. It had recognised the need for improvement before the recent inspection took place and had commissioned support from a National Leader in Education and her National Support School. The support is proving effective. The local authority has plans to extend collaboration into the next phase of the school's development. It has supported the broadening of skills within the governing body. There is a considerable degree of unanimity in the vision for the school between the local authority, governors and the new leadership that inspires confidence in the future.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**