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19 November 2013

Jane Radbourne  
The Grove School  
Newcastle Road  
TF9 1HF

Dear Ms Radbourne

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Grove School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 November 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that action plans have smaller, measurable steps which link with half termly progress information and allow senior leaders and governors to have a more accurate picture of students' progress
- ensure that all students who enter school at Level 4 have support to improve their literacy skills
- ensure that all teachers follow the marking and learning policies in order to improve students' spelling, punctuation and grammar and encourage independent learning skills.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the previous inspection. The school action plans were evaluated together with the minutes of the governing body. Brief observations were made of 14 parts of

lessons with the headteacher; students' exercise books were scrutinised as was the impact of the school's monitoring activities.

## **Context**

There are no significant changes in context since the previous inspection.

## **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, you have focused primarily on the development issues it highlighted. The school's action plans reflect these areas for development. Departments have detailed plans with clearly measurable outcomes linked to success criteria. However, the plans are not always broken down into smaller, measurable steps to enable you to review, at half termly intervals, the impact of the actions you have taken.

Although the summer GCSE results in English were better, some students did not make expected progress because of poor literacy skills. The reading levels of all students are tested and a strategy is in place to support all those working at National Curriculum Level 3, but students working at Level 4 are not provided with the extra support needed to move them on apace. The library provides a good range of both non-fiction and fiction to encourage students to read more frequently and widely. In some subjects including English, modern foreign languages, history and science there is a consistent focus on improving students' literacy skills. In these subjects students, are helped to improve their reading and understanding of texts and they respond well to teachers' consistent expectations that written work will be well presented with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

You have encouraged teachers to work together and this is encouraging innovation. For example, the recently introduced learning and marking policies emphasise the development of students' independent study skills. The regular monitoring by middle leaders is helping to embed good practice. The science department is trialling different approaches to marking and feedback that involve students taking greater responsibility for improving their own work. Through these initiatives, the school is ensuring that good practice is shared and sustained and improving teaching and learning.

You have brought forward developments to the curriculum so that it is better matched to students' needs. Teachers are focusing on developing students' independent study skills. The introduction of the level 2 vocational courses at post 16 provides a significant number of students with opportunities to improve their basic skills and gives them a wider range of choices after leaving school.

The governing body has had an external review of its work and has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Governors have undertaken a range of training and have begun to develop the role of link governors. The minutes

of governing body meetings have begun to record the ways in which governors are holding leaders to account. They do not yet record the actions that follow from this.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority knows the school well and has regular discussions concerning progress. The school is able to draw on support, which is carefully matched to the school's needs and which complements the training that the school can provide for itself.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**