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18 September 2014

Mrs Wendy Missons  
Headteacher  
Great Yarmouth (VA) High School  
Salisbury Road  
Great Yarmouth  
NR30 4LS

Dear Ms Missons

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Great Yarmouth (VA) High School**

Following my visit to your school on 17 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 June 2014. 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:

- rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact that all subject leaders are having on improving the quality of teaching and accelerating the progress made by students.
- ensure that you, your senior leaders and governors share a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching through regular monitoring, including regular observations of lessons, and prioritise the training, support and challenge needed to improve it quickly.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and some of your senior leaders, two members of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. You shared with me the GCSE results achieved by students this year. An opportunity to walk the school with you enabled me to see students at work in lessons.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection 18 new staff have joined the school, including an assistant headteacher and three middle leaders.

## **Main findings**

This year, the proportions of Year 11 students attaining a GCSE grade C or above in English and in mathematics is low. A much higher proportion of students made expected progress in English compared with mathematics. You acknowledge that these outcomes are too low and require significant improvement if the school is to be judged good at its next inspection.

You have put in place a suitable action plan to address this underperformance and to tackle the issues raised in the last inspection. Early signs are that this is working in some areas. For example, you can point to significant improvements already made in some subjects where data shows that students have achieved well.

You have strengthened procedures for monitoring how well teachers are providing suitably challenging work for students and for marking their work. Expectations of teachers are higher. They are expected to complete an extended writing task every half-term which is assessed rigorously by teachers. There is a renewed focus on ensuring their work is presented neatly, and for completing regular homework. These procedures are relatively new. More time is needed to gauge the impact they are having on improving students' learning and progress.

A small proportion of inadequate teaching noted by you and your senior leaders is being rigorously addressed. A calendar of monitoring, including learning walks and regular scrutiny of students' work, has been implemented to improve the overall quality of teaching. Regular, formal observations of lessons where you and your senior leaders know that teaching requires improvement are less systematic, and are not used often enough to help staff increase their effectiveness.

A recently appointed assistant headteacher has taken full responsibility for managing assessment and ensuring that assessment data is used widely and often by teachers and subject leaders to raise expectations of students. Revised targets have been set. Students are expected to make at least three levels progress based on their starting points. You acknowledge that these procedures are not fully embedded and more needs to be done to ensure that all staff have a detailed understanding of how assessment data can be used to raise students' achievement. Another assistant headteacher has taken full responsibility for improving attendance and for reducing

the numbers of students excluded from school. Improved liaison with parents and carers, regular monitoring by form-tutors and improved links with the school's inclusion unit is leading to some improvement at this stage.

The Governing Body acknowledges the need for urgent improvement to the school. A new committee will meet from this term onwards to monitor and evaluate students' attainment and progress, and to provide additional challenge for you and your senior and middle leaders to raise achievement. The Single Central Record remains secure.

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**

You are working more closely with a local authority intervention officer to identify what the school does well and what it needs to improve upon. You value this support provided by the local authority. Partnerships with other schools to enable your staff to benefit from good practice locally are less well-developed.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**