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3 December 2014

Mr Stephen Cardwell  
Headteacher  
Fulbrook Middle School  
Weathercock Lane  
Woburn Sands  
Milton Keynes  
MK17 8NP

Dear Mr Cardwell

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fulbrook Middle School**

Following my visit to your academy on 2 December 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 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 academy should take further action to:

- define more precisely the roles of all school leaders in the process of checking the quality of teaching and learning
- refine the academy improvement plan by including measurable targets so that all academy leaders can review progress
- monitor more closely, and set targets for, the achievement of specific groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the subject leader for mathematics. I also met with seven members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I looked at pupils' books from across the academy. I also evaluated the academy's improvement plan and accompanied you on visits to all classrooms to observe teaching and learning.

## **Main findings**

You have acted promptly to address the areas identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection. You have increased the regularity and rigour of the checks that senior leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, when you carry out short visits to classrooms to check teaching you now have a specific focus and record your findings in detail. You are also observing teaching more regularly and also considering the quality of pupils' work when making judgements about teaching and learning. You are using these processes to identify strengths and areas that require further improvement. However, you have not established the role of senior and middle leaders within this process.

In order to raise expectations amongst teaching staff, you have set ambitious targets for improvement for individual pupils and whole year groups. You have also appointed a teacher to lead on assessment and have made improvements to the way that assessment information is recorded. However, you are not yet considering the progress of specific groups of pupils closely enough, nor are you setting targets for them to improve.

Governors have a wide range of expertise and are committed to ensuring that the academy is judged to be at least good at the next inspection. Governors have responded positively to the challenge presented by the inspection report. They have recently reviewed their roles and made a number of changes aimed at ensuring that each area of academy life has an appropriate level of support and challenge from a member of the governing body. This is already having an impact and has led governors to ask more challenging questions about the curriculum and the quality of teaching. A review of governance was recommended and this is due to take place in January 2015.

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

## **External support**

The academy is drawing upon external support from a variety of sources, including a local teaching school, through which teachers are accessing training aimed at

improving teaching. The academy has also received some effective support from the local authority's governor services team.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Central Bedfordshire and the Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**