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30 June 2008

Mrs Gill Labrum
The Headteacher
Windsor Girls' School
Imperial Road
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Dear Mrs Labrum

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 June 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and students who spoke to me.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 22 and 23 May 2007, the school was asked to:

- Ensure that all aspects of the work of the school are sharply focussed on improving the progress that students make.
- Implement systems and procedures to ensure the effective monitoring of the work of the school to inform plans for further improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all teachers meet the needs of all students in lessons and through their use of assessment.
- Develop a curriculum that fully meets the needs of sixth form students.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

Students' GCSE results in 2007 were broadly comparable to previous years representing satisfactory progress for this cohort of girls. However detailed tracking and evidence from the school suggests that current Year 11 students are on track to make substantial improvements in GCSE results indicating better progress at Key Stage 4 than at the time of the last inspection. Students' progress is now consistently tracked and monitored based on challenging targets. As a result, actions have been taken to improve underperformance of individual girls although more work needs to be done to develop all teachers' skills in this respect. Sixth form students, in

particular, appreciate the way subject teachers, tutors and the new head of sixth form keep a regular check on their progress and provide guidance about how they can improve.

Since the last inspection the senior leadership team and governing body have been significantly restructured. This has included the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, a new assistant headteacher and a new chair of governors. The senior leadership team and governors now share the headteacher's determined vision and have clear roles and responsibilities focused on school development. This has enabled the school to implement many systems and policies to effect improvement. A significant number of initiatives and structures are now firmly in place providing a strong platform for further improvement. Middle leadership is more effective consistently good and middle leaders are very positive about the changes that have taken place. The headteacher has been very careful to consult widely about any changes that have taken place. Staff, therefore, feel positive and secure about the way forward for the school. As one subject leader commented, 'I now know where I am going!' They do feel though that they now need time to embed changes and review and evaluate the progress made so far.

The school has made particularly good progress in improving its self-evaluation and developing its systems for effective monitoring. The school improvement plan is both realistic and strategic. Actions within it reflect the key priorities that the school needs to address. Success criteria are in place although these are not always quantifiable which limits the ability to judge the extent to which the actions have been successful. There are very good links between the school development plan, department development plans and individual staff performance targets ensuring that everyone is moving in the same direction. New systems have been implemented alongside training for middle leaders to ensure that subject leaders are now more rigorously monitoring and evaluating the work of their departments and progress is regularly reviewed by the senior leadership. The restructured governing body has improved its scrutiny of the school's performance and is providing a good level of challenge which has added rigour to the self-evaluation process.

There has been a clear focus on improving teaching and learning in the last year. The school rightly judges that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but there are many signs that it is improving. Much training and work has taken place to ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of what leads to good learning. There is now an increased focus on student's learning rather than mainly on teachers' actions. This is leading to more opportunities for students to take an active part in the lessons. Students confirm that these are frequently the lessons that they learn most from and would like more opportunities to learn in this way. Staff are more skilled at ensuring that the work set is at an appropriate level for most students. The school has identified that the next focus for improvement is on increasing challenge for the most able students and removing the inconsistencies that remain in giving feedback to students. Plans to do this are already in place.

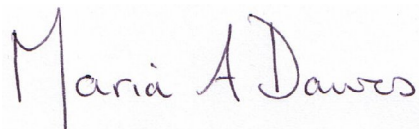
In the last year the school has reviewed the appropriateness of its 14-19 curriculum. The range of vocational courses in place from September 2008 has increased and the school is planning progression routes for this cohort into the sixth form. In

addition from September 2008 there are increased opportunities in the sixth form curriculum. In particular the introduction of Performing Arts and ICT A-levels has led to an increased number of applications for next year. Students now have increased opportunities to play a part in the life of the college and the local community and the range of enrichment opportunities on offer to them has improved.

Students are very positive about the changes that have happened in the school and share whole heartedly in the new school vision that they helped develop: for all students to 'Aspire, Advance and Achieve' beyond their expectations. In particular the school council is increasingly proactive and making a difference. They are keen to continue to develop this role with regard to a wider school improvement role.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Maria A Dawes".

Maria Dawes
Her Majesty's Inspector