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Mr Ronald Searle
Headteacher
The Warwick School
Noke Drive
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Dear Mr Searle

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 June 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Could you also convey my thanks to the chair of governors, the senior leadership team, staff and students.

The school is no longer a vocational lead school, as this designation was removed after the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve behaviour by ensuring there is greater consistency in lessons and across the school
- raise the standards of low-attaining boys
- improve the quality of teaching and learning, by enhancing the rigour and impact of monitoring procedures.

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

In 2008, students achieved standards which were exceptionally low and made inadequate progress overall. This was due to the very slow progress they made in Years 7 to 9. Students made satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 and the progress made in English was good. However, the faster rate of progress made in later years was insufficient to enable students to make up for prior underachievement. Achievement in 2008 was inadequate. The school has taken action to implement many effective measures to halt students' underachievement. The school's monitoring of achievement in 2009 indicates that standards for both Years 9 and 11 are set to rise considerably; they are predicted to be broadly average. The proportion of students set to achieve high grades in five or more GCSE subjects, including mathematics and English, is set to rise considerably. The rise in standards is due to the highly effective tracking system which monitors students'

achievements well, to enable the school to implement appropriate intervention measures. Standards in the other specialist subjects of science and technology are also predicted to rise. In 2008, students achieved high grades in design and technology which were significantly above the national average. The school has developed an effective alternative curriculum to enable students at risk of significant underachievement and low attendance to stay on at school. Students on this programme achieved well in 2008.

Wide-ranging effective actions have resulted in improved levels of students' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Behaviour is now satisfactory and there are good and varied sanctions for students who do not behave well. For example, senior leaders' intervention and placing students in an alternative class are measures that are working effectively. Students believe that improved behaviour has resulted in the school becoming a calmer environment and that disruptions previously experienced in lessons have been considerably reduced. Disruptions are now being dealt with swiftly. Students know the standard of behaviour expected of them. The school celebrates good behaviour and its 'Caught being Good' scheme is appreciated by students. They are rewarded for good academic work and for personal or community behaviour, for example helping a fellow student or behaving well in lessons. The level of student attendance has improved to a satisfactory position. The school has significantly reduced the level of persistent absences in the last two years; it is now broadly in line with other schools nationally. Effective measures are used as an alternative to excluding students with poor behaviour, and the level of fixed-term exclusions has reduced considerably in the last year. These measures are having a positive impact on students' achievements.

The proportion of outstanding lessons has improved; however, the level of satisfactory teaching is still high. In the better lessons observed, teachers displayed good subject knowledge and the fast pace of learning enabled students to make good progress. In these lessons, students made good contributions, answered questions well and completed set tasks diligently. In one lesson observed, students were given the opportunity to assess their peers' work which helped to reinforce their level of understanding. In weaker lessons, tasks did not always challenge students to do their best or build effectively on prior learning. Assessment of what students had learned in lessons was not always undertaken effectively. In one lesson which was dominated by the teacher, there were insufficient opportunities for students to take charge of their own learning. Some marking of work did not give informative or evaluative comments on how students should improve their work or what their next steps of learning should be. As a result, students are unclear as to how they can improve their grades.

The alternative curriculum is addressing the needs of students who were at risk of being excluded for poor behaviour and poor attendance. The 'Route 4' curriculum offers students at risk of not continuing in employment, education or training (NEET) appropriate vocational qualifications to enable them to progress on to further education. The level of student progression to further education was high in 2008 and is set to be maintained in 2009.

The school's improved monitoring of teaching and learning has been effective in identifying and targeting support for staff who are, in the main, newly qualified teachers or new to the school. Prior to this academic year, the school had experienced a high proportion of teachers joining or leaving the school. The level of staff turnover has now slowed, which has enabled school leaders to implement good measures to raise the standard of teaching and learning across the school. Strategies in place have had a good impact on improving the proportion of outstanding lessons within the school. However, the school recognises that the proportion of satisfactory and inadequate lessons is too high to enable students to make good progress. Regular training to improve teachers' practice in areas of weakness and opportunities for staff to share good practice are developing well.

The process of target setting and the identification of underachieving students have improved. Improved data analysis has contributed well to the raising of standards in Years 9 and 11. Governors know the school well and are supportive of the head and the senior leadership team; the level of challenge to the school's work is improving. Leaders recognise that attention needs to be given to the completion of the single central record and to the system for recording the dispensing of medicines to students.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector