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Mr P Wright
Henley in Arden High School
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Dear Mr Wright

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 2009 with additional inspectors Andrew Bird and Deborah James. Thank you also for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please would you also pass on our thanks to all those who spoke to us during the inspection especially the students whose honest and thoughtful responses greatly helped us in our considerations.

Since the last inspection, the leadership team has been extended with two additional assistant headteacher posts and new appointments at middle leader level.

As a result of the inspection on 9-10 December 2008, the school was asked to raise the achievement of boys by ensuring that all teaching fully engages their attention; to refine the systems for tracking students' progress and ensure that data is used well by teachers in their planning; to ensure that marking and target setting consistently help the students to know how to improve; to ensure that the outcomes of monitoring are used more effectively to shape school improvement.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Following a dip in results in national tests in 2008, the school instigated a range of strategies to tackle the underachievement of boys. As a result, there was a very marked improvement in 2009. Standards rose for all students and the gap between the attainment of boys and girls closed significantly. It was in line or smaller than that found nationally on several measures. All students made better progress than in the previous three years. The school's records of current progress show that



standards are continuing to rise. Students in Year 11 this year are confidently expected to exceed the school's challenging targets. During the visit, students were observed to be making good progress in lessons.

The systems for tracking the progress students are making have been substantially improved. The school makes good use of the information these systems provide to refine provision. The curriculum has been developed to allow for greater flexibility and to offer courses that meet individual needs more closely. Two significant developments which are having a positive impact on achievement are the coverage of the Key Stage 3 curriculum in two years and new option pathways at Key Stage 4 with additional courses that appeal to boys. This has increased enjoyment and raised attendance.

Teachers work hard to ensure that lessons include topics and activities that will engage the boys. The specialist subjects in performing arts make a significant contribution to enjoyment and engagement. Cross curricular links are being established to share the expertise in these subjects across the school. Good examples of these approaches were observed in an art lesson, where the work of a contemporary artist was being reviewed and in music where students were creating accompaniments to animated films.

Teachers have detailed information on the progress of students in their groups. The use made of the data in planning lessons is variable. In a number of lessons students were all engaged in the same activities which slowed the progress of the more able students.

The school has invested in improved facilities to enhance the climate for learning. This includes new facilities for the specialist subjects and interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. Students appreciate the improved arrangements for sharing information on their progress with them and with their parents. Other systems to help guide the students on how to improve their work are developing well. Leaders in the school have concentrated with success on improving the quality of marking, although some minor inconsistency remains.

Roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have been restructured and the systems for monitoring the work of the school are now rigorous. Governors challenge and support the school well. Leaders at all levels make use of a wide range of evidence when evaluating their work. The results of this evaluation are used well to plan subsequent actions. The improved outcomes and successes in addressing the issues from the previous inspection indicate that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elaine Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector