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13 December 2012

Robert Robson  
Principal  
Samuel Whitbread Community College  
Shefford Road  
Clifton  
Shefford  
SG17 5QS

Dear Mr Robson

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Samuel Whitbread Community College**

Following my visit to your academy on 12 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the Principal, Vice Principal and three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of students from Years 10 and 11. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the feedback to teachers following lesson observations.

**Context**

The interim head of science from the last inspection has left the academy and new leadership arrangements are in place. There have been no other significant changes since the recent inspection which judged the school to require improvement.

## **Main findings**

The academy accepts that the outcomes from the recent inspection are the right ones. Leaders, including governors, have made suitable plans to strengthen priorities already identified before the inspection. These priorities are now included in a revised academy improvement plan which sets out clearly the actions to be carried out. The plan identifies suitable timescales. The actions relate directly to raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. Although the plan includes some measurable success criteria against which the impact of the academy's work can be checked, these criteria are not made explicit.

Senior leaders have responded with sufficient urgency and have taken immediate action to:

- strengthen the leadership in science and history
- build greater capacity at senior leadership level and raised teachers' expectations about students' learning
- bring more rigour to the tracking of students' progress by establishing baseline data in Year 9.
- develop the roles of middle leaders

The Governing Body has made a positive response to the recommendations in the recent inspection. There is a secure commitment to continue to drive academy improvement forward by carefully monitoring and evaluating how well the actions for improvement are being met and by holding leaders to account for students' outcomes.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the academy, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- tweak the improvement plan to include numerical targets explicitly that help the governing body to judge whether actions have been successful in raising students' achievement; improving the quality of teaching; and strengthening the impact of leaders and managers
- ensure that leaders follow up on improvement points from their lesson observations more quickly than is done at present.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The academy is part of a multi-academy trust which includes a school designated as a teaching school. Support from this school has contributed to improving the quality

of teaching at Samuel Whitbread Community College, particularly in modern foreign languages. Some staff from the teaching school also teach in this department, thereby ensuring that effective teaching is modelled. The academy uses the expertise of a school improvement consultant to provide an external audit for senior leaders. The consultant also provides evaluative reports to the governing body.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**