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21 January 2013

Mrs Angela Martinson  
Headteacher  
Newland School for Girls  
Thorpe Park Road  
Hull  
HU6 9ES

Dear Mrs Martinson

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Newland School for Girls**

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2013, 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 headteacher, senior leaders, several members of the Governing Body, a group of middle managers and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and other documents, including the governors' minutes, considered.

**Context**

The school continues to be based at a temporary site while its own buildings are redeveloped. It has plenty of space, but the current buildings are tatty and there have been some issues with heating.

## Main findings

Since the last inspection the school and department plans have been revised; there have been only moderate amendments to the overall school plan. School leaders say that they were not surprised by any of the issues raised in the inspection report and that it has not been necessary to change any of their priorities.

The school has consolidated on its move to temporary accommodation. Staff report progress in a number of areas such as more consistent behaviour management and greater urgency in addressing literacy across the curriculum. Plans are in hand for a revised curriculum in 2013 and staff feel that they are held to account for their performance as teachers.

Nonetheless, strategic school development planning is not robust enough to ensure sustained improvement. The current format is unhelpful in managing a substantial workload and has a number of weaknesses. The objectives are too broad, do not always have precise criteria to articulate what is to be achieved, and do not have milestones by which to monitor progress. Too many objectives are the responsibility of teams but some senior staff, such as the deputy headteachers, do not have sufficient identifiable responsibilities within the plan.

The plans do not currently address all the weaknesses identified in the inspection. A disproportionate amount is about behaviour, but there is no specific section on achievement or consistent leadership practice. The school had notably weak results for pupils with higher levels of ability and staff understand this, but there is no specific section of the plan which sets out how the school will address this and how it will know if it has been successful.

The nature of the school planning documentation makes it difficult for governors to engage with actions and hold staff to account either now or in the future. There is no process for risk rating progress on the actions, or sorting them by date order. In fact many objectives are too broad to monitor or evaluate effectively. However some of the practice where subject leaders report to the governors is very helpful.

Senior leaders have begun to see that there are questions around whether aspirations are sufficiently high. The local authority has helped broker a link with a National Leader of Education from St Mary's College in Hull which will focus on strategic planning, but there is also more to be done in terms of developing a view of what outstanding teaching and behaviour look like – and incorporating such understanding into the planning.

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

- review the structure of the development plan so that it addresses all priorities and is more useful in planning actions, monitoring progress and holding staff to account
- ensure all appropriate senior staff hold accountable responsibilities for specific outcomes in the plan
- engage the governing body in regularly monitoring progress against the specified actions and objectives

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

## **External support**

Since the inspection, the local authority has not been able to sufficiently influence the quality of the school's planning but has adopted an appropriate response to this in forming a link to a local outstanding school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kingston upon Hull City of and as below.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Gray

## **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.