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26 April 2013

Mrs J Stevenson  
Headteacher  
St Dunstan's School  
Wells Road  
Glastonbury  
BA6 9BY

Dear Mrs Stevenson

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to St Dunstan's School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit I met with you, your deputy, two members of the governing body, a group of students, a group of subject leaders and the member of staff who has responsibility for pupil premium funding. I also had a phone conversation with the headteacher of Crispin School, Street. I evaluated the school development plan and the school and department action plans which have been written in response to the areas for improvement identified during the inspection.

#### **Context**

Before the inspection in January the headteacher had informed the governing body that she was going to retire at the end of the summer term 2013. The governing body has agreed with the governing body of Crispin School for the headteacher of that school to act as an executive headteacher of both schools from September 2013. A deputy headteacher will be seconded from Crispin School to work as the headteacher of St Dunstan's. Senior and subject leaders from both schools will work

together to strengthen leadership. From September the governing body for St Dunstan's will include governors from both schools.

## **Main findings**

The quality of teaching has improved. Lessons are more engaging and challenging. Students say they learn better and that more lessons try to help them understand their work.

The school has ensured that staff consistently apply whole school policies and procedures. Behaviour has improved because staff take more responsibility for the behaviour of students in their lessons by using the agreed procedures. More interesting and enjoyable lessons have also contributed to better behaviour.

Results in mathematics for GCSE modules and examinations completed in March 2013 show that achievement has improved. Assessment records and predictions for English also show a significant improvement. The school is set to better the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress, if these levels are confirmed this summer. Assessment records and predictions show an improvement in progress made by pupils in humanities and science but achievement in science remains low.

The school has reduced the gap between achievement of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and others but achievement for this group is still well below that of their peers. Pupil premium funds have been used to increase achievement for this group by giving them revision guides and extra help in small groups. It has also been used to raise aspirations by paying for students to visit highly regarded universities.

Achievement for disabled students and those with special education needs has improved. Students who are supported at school action plus make improved progress, their attendance has increased and the proportion of these students who are excluded for a short time has reduced.

The school development plan identifies the appropriate actions to improve teaching and raise achievement and it has been reinforced by an action plan in response to the inspection. Departments have also written plans. While these plans respond to areas for improvement within the inspection report they do not always give sufficient information or identify what the school needs to do to become good. Subject plans do not focus on how each subject will ensure achievement is good. These plans also fail to set out how they are going to increase the achievement of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those with special education needs to be closer to achievement overall. Actions are often general and do not identify how this relates to the specific subject. For example all plans have 'improving questioning skills' but do not identify which skills need to be improved for each subject. Subject leaders know that improving questioning in mathematics is

about developing a better understanding of the mathematical concepts used and in English it is about getting students to develop analysis and evaluation skills as well as greater creativity. However this detail is missing from plans.

The governing body has been very engaged in securing the leadership of the school. This has meant at times they have not been as focused upon checking how well the school has been in raising standards and improving work in the classrooms. The action plans written in response to the inspection do not include governors as part of the monitoring or evaluation. New governors are enrolled on courses from Somerset Children's Services later this term so that they have a good understanding of safeguarding and other relevant issues.

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:

- strengthen the action plans to include actions which will raise achievement to good including actions improve to the achievement of disabled students, those with special education needs and students who are known to be eligible for free school meals
- give more detail of how actions relate to specific subjects and what this will look like in lessons and in student's books
- identify how the governing body will evaluate the impact of the actions.

I will make a further visit to support subject leaders evaluate the impact of actions to improve questioning by joint observations and analysis of work in books. I will also support subject leaders update their action plans. In September I will visit the school to see how effective the new leadership is at raising achievement and what needs to be done in response to the 2013 GCSE results.

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

### **External support**

There has been little external support to date although the joint work with Crispin School from September will provide support for senior and subject leaders as well as support for science.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**