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21 November 2011

Ms Julie Stewart  
Headteacher  
Medina House School  
School Lane  
Newport  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 2HS

Dear Ms Stewart

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Medina House School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 November 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and to the interim Head of Learning and Achievement for finding the time to meet with me.

As a result of the inspection on 16–17 June 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

There have been a number of changes since the previous inspection. The acting headteacher at the time was replaced by a different acting headteacher for the remainder of the summer term. The current, permanent headteacher took up post in September, at which time the acting headteacher became acting deputy headteacher. Also by that time, the responsibilities of the governing body had passed to an Interim Executive Board appointed by the local authority. There are almost 20% fewer pupils on roll than when the school was last inspected.

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 pupils' achievement.

The school has taken effective action in making the changes necessary to ensure that the school meets all minimum statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding pupils and promoting their welfare and well-being. Following a comprehensive safeguarding audit, all required policies and procedures have been written and implemented, having been signed off by the Interim Executive Board. An audit of all staff revealed their status in terms of training across a range of safeguarding

aspects, and the school responded appropriately to the outcomes of this survey. All staff have now received training in child protection, with designated officers trained to an appropriate level, and in moving and handling children safely. In addition, relevant staff are trained fully to carry out their responsibilities in areas such as fire marshalling, staff recruitment, first aid and paediatric first aid. The single central record complies fully with current vetting procedures.

The school is not in a position to make an accurate judgement of the progress made by pupils during the year 2010/11 because the headteacher is not confident about the accuracy of historical assessment data. This situation is being addressed as more accurate attainment levels have been determined for all pupils, and suitable targets have been set. However, there has not been enough time for these changes to have had a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement. Learning in lessons is satisfactory because, despite pockets of good practice, teaching is satisfactory overall. Although there is the beginning of a consistent approach to the format of lesson plans, the quality of teachers' planning remains patchy. While some plan to meet the needs of individuals and small groups through challenging activities that are well matched to their capabilities and needs, building well on prior learning, this is not routine. Learning does not proceed at such a good pace when teachers do not use information of pupils' previous achievements effectively to provide activities that present sufficiently different levels of challenge to all pupils, especially those who are higher attaining.

The school still has a high ratio of adults to pupils and so not all staff are deployed efficiently in ways that actively promote pupils' learning. Leaders are taking effective steps to address this as the school is in the formal consultative stage of a major staff restructuring programme, which is a welcome development given the school's financial status. This initiative is indicative of how the school is developing a more systematic and robust approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. For instance, a community cohesion audit is under way and performance management procedures for teachers have been introduced. The headteacher has observed all teachers' classroom practice and all teachers have been set annual objectives.

The local authority's statement of action for supporting the school's improvement is fit for purpose. Its action plan is proving to be effective in practice in some respects, such as in the establishment of a support and mentoring mechanism for the headteacher. This includes, for instance, a programme of dual lesson observations to be carried out with a very experienced headteacher that begins later this month. Furthermore, the local authority is supporting self-evaluation procedures well by brokering links with outstanding schools both on and beyond the island, which staff have visited, and by commissioning the support and advice of school leaders with a track record of developing and leading highly effective provision. In addition, the school itself is taking the lead in strengthening links with other agencies, such as in the pursuit of absentees. Collectively, these improved contacts with partners are beginning to enhance the school's effectiveness, with some very early indications of

improved outcomes for pupils. For example, attendance is now broadly average, with little unauthorised absence.

In other ways, the local authority's action plan has not had a full impact. Primarily, this is because changes in personnel have disrupted consistency of support. For instance, the local authority's nominated monitoring officer has already changed since term began, but as the school does not receive written feedback reports following these visits there is no assurance of an integrated, coordinated approach to monitoring and evaluation. In addition, there have already been two Chairs of the Interim Executive Board, which has hampered continuity and stability.

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

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011.**

- Take effective and immediate steps to put in place all the statutory requirements currently missing, especially those relating to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils.
- Improve leaders' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by:
  - monitoring the quality of provision, especially teaching and learning
  - increasing the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and improving the quality of strategic planning.
- Ensure that class teachers use assessment information effectively to:
  - provide appropriate challenge for pupils
  - enable the effective deployment of other adults in the classroom to support pupils' learning.