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8 May 2013

Mrs P Jackson  
Headteacher  
Hollymount School  
Cambridge Road  
Raynes Park  
London  
SW20 0SQ

Dear Mrs Jackson

### **Monitoring inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Hollymount School, Merton**

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on my findings. 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and other staff, including teachers and middle leaders. We visited classrooms together, observing pupils' working and discussing their work with them. I met four members of the governing body, including the Chair, and the school's education partner from the local authority. I scrutinised a small sample of pupils' work. I looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' achievement, minutes of governing body meetings and reviews undertaken by the local authority. I evaluated the school's Post-Ofsted Action Plan.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes in staffing or the organisation of the school since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

While disappointed by inspectors' findings, you, your staff and governors quickly rallied together to ensure the school becomes good as soon as possible. The school has set challenging targets for pupils' attainment and progress. Current tracking information suggests attainment is likely to rise considerably in this year's National Curriculum tests. Leaders and managers know that these improvements are essential if the school is to achieve its stated aim of 'being securely good by Autumn, 2013'. The school's Post-Ofsted Action Plan is of good quality and focuses sharply on the areas for improvement identified by inspectors.

Strategies to improve the quality of teaching are having a clear impact in accelerating pupils' progress. Leaders and managers have sharpened the quality of lesson observations to address the weaknesses in teaching. Pupils' books in Key Stage 1 show a marked improvement in the quality and quantity of their writing. Judgements about the quality of teaching are more secure because they are informed by a wide range of additional information, including monitoring of teachers' planning, scrutinies of pupils' work and analysis of pupils' achievement. The school makes good use of these observations to identify appropriate professional development opportunities for staff. Lesson observations focus more clearly on pupils' progress, although written feedback to teachers does not always identify explicitly whether all groups of pupils made good progress in the lesson.

Teachers have responded very positively and professionally to increased scrutiny by senior and middle leaders. They value the regular feedback they receive, including by the subject leaders for English and mathematics. They can also see how the increased curriculum time for reading and writing is raising pupils' achievement. Middle leaders have a much better understanding of pupil performance data as a result of recent training. This means they are able to carry out their roles more strategically and confidently than before. They recognise that this information now needs to be cascaded to all teachers to strengthen their understanding of pupils' performance over time across the school. Staff say that communication between senior staff and teachers has improved significantly since the inspection.

The governing body is playing a key role in helping the school to quickly improve. Governors meet more regularly and ensure that meetings are focused on the key areas for improvement. They have a good understanding of school performance data and monitor pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics very carefully. Governors regularly monitor the impact of the school's Post-Ofsted Action Plan. They offer good support and challenge to the school, not least through visits to lessons where they evaluate how well the school's Post-Ofsted Action Plan is being implemented. Governors remain committed to constantly improving their practice and recently commissioned a review of their own strengths and weaknesses to see how governance can be strengthened further.

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 school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- strengthen teachers' understanding of school performance data to increase their knowledge of how well pupils are achieving over time at the school
- ensure written feedback from lesson observations explicitly evaluates whether all groups of pupils made good progress in the lesson.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. We agreed to speak again following publication of the National Curriculum test results later in the year.

### **External support**

The school benefits from very good support from the local authority. This includes support for less experienced teachers and support for all staff in English and mathematics. The local authority has also helped governors review their effectiveness. The school's Merton Education Partner supports the school by scrutinising achievement data, checking on the accuracy of lesson observations and monitoring the impact of the school's action planning. The local authority has also brokered support for the school from a Local Leader of Education.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Merton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**