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4 July 2013

Ms Anne Martin  
Headteacher  
Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School  
The Green Road  
Ashbourne  
DE6 1EP

Dear Ms Martin

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit I met with you, the associate headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the school improvement partner and members of the Governing Body. I evaluated the school improvement plan and a range of documentation. This included the school self-evaluation form, data relating to students' attainment and progress as well as minutes of recent governing body meetings. The associate head took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to a range of classes.

#### **Context**

Since the previous inspection in April, a new assistant headteacher has been appointed and will take up his new post in September. Also, the middle leadership of the school has been re-structured into five new faculty areas.

## **Main findings**

Your ambition and determination to become a good school is widely shared across the staff and the governing body. Following the inspection, you have built up momentum and this has resulted in swift improvement in a short time. The senior staff and governors have a clear view of what is required to improve further. They know that ensuring consistently good teaching across the school and good rates of progress for all students is paramount.

You were prompt to compile an action plan to supplement the areas for improvement that were already in the school development plan. Following this a comprehensive action plan for the coming year has been drawn up which covers the key recommendations outlined in the inspection report. A summary overview has been created with clear and measurable success criteria for each priority area. This will enable you and the governing body to check on your progress throughout the plan easily.

The essential actions required for improvement are already underway. These include:

- training to improve the quality of teaching
- setting clear expectations of progress across each year and key stage
- implementing a new system for tracking students' progress that gives a clear overview of progress across the school
- establishing clear expectations for teachers in marking and assessing students' work
- training to improve the teaching of literacy
- restructuring the leadership team of heads of faculty
- improving line management meetings to enable checks to be made of the progress of every student in every subject
- making new arrangements through the performance management of staff to hold teachers to account for teaching quality and students' progress.

Governors receive regular information on all aspects of the school's work and know the school better than previously. Evaluations of the school's performance are accurate and honest. Governors are clear about what requires improvement and how this is to be achieved. Most importantly, the governors have a better understanding of how well teachers are doing in terms of the progress that their students make.

Senior leaders and the governing body are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- maintain a tight focus on evaluating learning in lessons and student's progress over time

- ensure that the governing body receives regular reports from an external adviser on the progress being made in achieving the objectives identified for each priority area in the school improvement plan.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school receives effective support from a number of sources. An external consultant has provided intensive support to senior and middle leaders to improve the accuracy of their evaluations. External support has also been provided to improve leadership in targeted subjects. This is set to continue in the coming year for new and developing leaders. Partnerships have been established with high performing secondary and primary schools to share and spread good teaching practice. The 'Peak 11' partnership of local secondary schools continues to provide a range of services and support around Key Stage 4 and sixth form provision. The current school improvement partner is leaving this term, and has been replaced. A programme of termly checks on the progress you are making towards meeting the priorities set out in your action plan has been arranged with your new school improvement partner.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and The Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**