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8 July 2013

Mrs M Whitfield  
Prendergast - Ladywell Fields College  
Manwood Road  
London  
SE4 1SA

Dear Mrs Whitfield

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Prendergast – Ladywell Fields College**

Following my visit to your college on 5 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 college since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the college was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, four heads of faculty, a group of staff who started this academic year, and a group of students from Years 7 to 10. I also held discussions with members of the governing body and two representatives from the Local Authority. I reviewed progress made against the college action plan. I also looked at the college's records of recruitment checks on staff. The executive headteacher (designate) and headteacher (designate) attended the meeting on leadership and management, and the final feedback to the college.

### **Context**

Since the previous visit to your college in December 2012, you have tendered your resignation. A new headteacher has been appointed. Following the executive headteacher's announcement that she was entering retirement, governors have also filled this post. Both the executive headteacher (designate) and the headteacher

(designate) have spent some time in the college in preparation for the commencement of their employment in September 2013. Plans to become an all-through school, and to admit pupils in Reception Class have been deferred until September 2014.

## **Main findings**

The college action plan has been extended to cover up until the end of this academic year and you have indicated clearly on the plan where gains have been made. It has not yet been extended to cover 2013 to 2014. Information on students' progress is more widely known by teachers. Subject leaders and classroom teachers confirmed this during discussions I held with them. The colour-coded system makes it easier for teachers to identify at which levels students are achieving, and to adjust their planning for learning accordingly. My scrutiny of teachers' lesson plans, the school's observation records and students' books indicates that the proportion of good and better teaching has improved since my last visit.

Students continue to achieve better in English than in mathematics and science. Data presented to me forecast an increase in the proportion of students set to gain 5 or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including in English and mathematics in 2013, but show that attainment in science is expected to dip slightly. Forecasts for 2014 indicate a much improved picture, but with mathematics and science still below the previous national average. Your high expectations and aspirations for students in Key Stage 3 are securing accelerated progress.

You work well with colleagues whose teaching is in need of improvement, and you use in-house expertise well to deliver useful training. In addition, you draw on external support, as and when required, to convey the importance of effective teaching and its impact on outcomes. Teachers responded positively to the latest training delivered by the Local Authority on 'Pace and Challenge'. Your lesson observation records are useful in identifying strengths and areas for development in teaching. Often, the judgement awarded for behaviour in lessons is better than for achievement and teaching. You would find it useful to have a whole-school discussion on what outstanding behaviour looks like during a lesson. Around the college as a whole, incidents of unacceptable behaviour have reduced and teachers told me they value the work done in the 'Reflection Room', particularly the reconciliation process between teachers at students at the end of the school day. Attendance for all students is now broadly in line with the national average, and has improved for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, as well as for those eligible for the Pupil Premium so that it exceeds the national average for these groups.

Members of the governing body are considering how effectively they are offering support, and are particularly sharper in ensuring that teachers' progression up the pay scale is linked to good quality teaching.

Senior leaders and governors are continuing 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:

- Extend the college action plan into 2013 –2014 so that it covers previously identified priorities, as well as conveying the vision of the college’s new senior leaders.
- Raise attainment in mathematics and science and accelerate progress in these subjects at Key Stage 4.
- Establish clearly what ‘outstanding’ behaviour looks like during a lesson.

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

### **External support**

The Local Authority has provided valuable support to the college through using consultants who have worked well with subject leaders to develop the leadership and management of English, mathematics and science. They also provided support for the appointment of the new executive headteacher and headteacher who both bring with them experience of leadership in a high-performing school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children’s Services Lewisham.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**