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11 November 2013

Miss Christine Holbrey  
Headteacher  
Canon Lee School  
Rawcliffe Drive  
Clifton Without  
York  
North Yorkshire  
YO30 6ZS

Dear Miss Holbrey

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Canon Lee School, York**

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

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to build on the initiatives it has begun to remove the remaining short-term barriers to improvement.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three members of the governing body, the senior and middle leaders in charge of mathematics, and a senior representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector looked at other documents, such as the governors' monitoring document and a review by the local authority. The inspector did not visit lessons but had lunch with pupils in the dining hall and toured parts of the school, briefly, with the headteacher.

### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection in September 2013 there have been no changes to key staff but there have been changes to the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team, which are continuing.

## **Main findings**

The school is taking effective action to ensure it is good at its next inspection. Suitable plans are in place to underpin this.

Importantly, decisive measures taken in the summer term to tackle weaknesses in teaching and leadership are now beginning to bear fruit. A number of staff left at the end of the summer term and others are being supported effectively to improve. New staff are bringing fresh ideas.

New staff appointed at senior leadership level have had time to begin to show impact: senior staff are driving forward the pace of change by modelling what the school expects. This is bringing on the middle leaders so that they, too, become more accountable for their areas and subjects.

Specific actions have been taken to address some weaker aspects of teaching:

- a new marking policy has been established and leaders are now checking that teachers apply this consistently
- a new, standardised means of planning lessons has been introduced
- systems to track the progress students make have been simplified, to encourage staff to make better use of this information when planning lessons
- steps have been taken in mathematics, in ways already established in English, to more clearly identify those students who have special educational needs and those who are in receipt of the pupil premium funding, so that staff can pinpoint their progress better.

The headteacher is strengthening the capacity of the senior leadership team quickly. The re-organised team brings a range of crucial expertise in school improvement. This includes the skills needed to understand and promote the progress of those pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities. Other expertise relates to how to promote good behaviour, an aspect that the school plans to address also, over time.

Despite some resistance, the headteacher is successfully moving the school forward. The school is now in a good position to develop staff teaching expertise further. The next steps are scheduled for spring term 2014.

The effectiveness of governance continues to grow. Some changes to the composition of the governing body have been made recently to re-invigorate its leadership and broaden the range of skills governors bring. Governors have worked closely with the headteacher to strengthen the school's improvement plan. They have a suitable, straightforward means of checking how effectively the school is

carrying this out: a monitoring sheet shows the targets the school is working to and how quickly these are being met. Specific, numerical targets link to improving pupils' progress. The first checks already show some positive impact, but this is inconsistent across subjects.

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 is drawing well on the external support provided by the local authority, including that provided by partner schools. The authority has brokered effective links with local schools judged to be outstanding and has provided consultants to work alongside teachers and middle leaders.

The impact of this work is most noticeable in developing further the skills of senior and middle leaders in ways that had begun just before the inspection, so that the school's plans for improvement are secure and actions taken are well-judged. Teachers' skills are growing, for example in mathematics, in working with pupils of lower ability, to begin to fill in the gaps in their learning. Increasing opportunities for training, mentoring and coaching are being provided through a cluster of schools locally. In this way staff are benefiting over the longer term from the observation of good practice and the sharing of ideas on how to develop teaching skills. It is recommended that the school continues to draw on the advice given to further strengthen mathematics, along the lines already begun.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for York and as below.

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [ [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) ] – for academies