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16 September 2014

Chris Leach  
Headteacher  
Great Wyrley High School  
Hall Lane  
Great Wyrley  
Walsall  
WS6 6LQ

Dear Mr Leach

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Great Wyrley High School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 June 2014. 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:

- Ensure the post-ofsted action plan allows progress with key actions to be measured more effectively, by:
  - setting intermediate milestones to be achieved along the way
  - allocating key staff to each action who have responsibility for monitoring the progress with these actions
- Check that all middle leaders are consistently carrying out checks on students' work and on the quality of teaching in line with school quality assurance procedures
- Take further action to encourage students with very poor attendance to re-engage with education and attend school more regularly by discussing with students the reasons for their poor attendance and taking steps to address these
- Introduce new approaches to assessment and reporting on progress across the school which fits the new national curriculum

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the designated safeguarding officer and subject leaders of English and mathematics; and a telephone conversation was held with the commissioning manager for school improvement from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The post-Ofsted action plan and updated school improvement plan were evaluated.

## **Context**

There have been no significant changes to staffing since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require improvement. There is a new Chair of Governors in post.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior team have wasted no time in taking action to improve the school, following the inspection. The immediate response was the formulating of your post-Ofsted action plan, which you have used together with the 2014 performance data to inform and update the school improvement plan. Further update is required to make monitoring procedures sharper so that governors are better able to track progress with these actions.

2014 examination results show improvements in overall attainment and there are now more students in English making the progress expected of them. Progress is slower in mathematics, but the department now has a stable staffing structure and this will enable greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the department. New schemes of work have been written in English and mathematics to meet the requirements of the new national curriculum at key stages 3 and 4. These will support teachers in planning activities to challenge the more able students, and support less able by identifying gaps in their learning and addressing these. There is further work to do on assessment so that students' progress is accurately checked from the time they join the school until the end of key stage 4 and beyond. Subject leaders of English and mathematics are confident that their new schemes of work state clearly what is to be taught. They are less secure in knowing about the impact that any improvements to teaching are having on learning and more work must be done here by senior leaders to challenge them to monitor this closely.

Your monitoring of the quality of teaching shows early signs of improvement. This is the result of your new strategy to support the professional development of teachers through trios, groups of three colleagues working together on activities such as in planning lessons. The outstanding teacher programme and the reflective teacher programme are being used to support some teachers. There is also a renewed emphasis on the quality of marking and feedback from students. Procedures are in place to improve the quality of marking, and feedback from students, and this now

requires careful monitoring by subject leaders to ensure consistency across the school. In mathematics, monitoring is less frequent than in other subjects.



You have introduced better strategies to make sure students who are absent do not fall behind. Students are now responsible for catching up with the work they have missed and this requires close monitoring to check that students are actually completing the work required. There are a small number of students with very poor attendance. These students usually attend their alternative curriculum provision that is arranged for them, but this is not yet supporting them in re-engaging with learning in other subjects. More needs to be done to identify the reasons for this, and further action taken to improve their attendance so that all students attend for the whole school day, either in alternative provision, or on the school site.

Governors have restructured with a small group who focus on monitoring the actions in the post-Ofsted action plan. Governors are now receiving more information on the progress of students in all key stages. Governors know how the pupil premium grant is spent, but are less clear about the difference it is making. Safeguarding procedures have been updated in accordance with new guidance and there have been no serious safeguarding concerns affecting staff or students.

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 effectively on a range of support being commissioned through the local authority. This includes support from a local leader of education supporting leadership of mathematics and other support for the English department and special educational needs provision.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire local authority.

Yours sincerely

Denah Jones  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**