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Mr Simon Duffy  
Headteacher  
Chipping Norton School  
Burford Road  
Chipping Norton  
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Dear Mr Duffy

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Chipping Norton School**

Following my visit to your academy on 29 April 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The inspection also focused on relevant aspects of the quality of leadership and management (including governance) at the academy.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders, the head of Year 7, the heads of mathematics and English, sixth form leaders, staff leading interventions in mathematics and literacy, teaching assistants, pastoral support staff, the leader for community learning, and two groups of disadvantaged students, one from Key Stage 3 and the other from Key Stage 4. Documents relating to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils along with samples of their work were scrutinised. The academy's self-evaluation, attendance data and development plans were reviewed. Short visits were made to Year 9 mathematics lessons, one Key Stage 4 religious education lesson, and additional provision to support disadvantaged students. A telephone call was made to an external consultant who has worked with the academy.

## **Context**

Chipping Norton School is a larger than average-sized secondary converter academy, with just over one in 10 students eligible for additional pupil premium funding. The academy serves a large, predominantly rural community in West Oxfordshire. Some students travel long distances in order to attend. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs or receive the highest level of additional support from the academy is below average. Since the last section 5 inspection in April 2012, new heads of science and English have been appointed, and there have been changes made to the leadership of the mathematics department.

## **Main findings**

The academy's leaders are successfully closing the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others in Key Stages 4 and 5. However, they are not doing this as effectively in Key Stage 3. As a result, gaps in disadvantaged students' achievement in Key Stage 3 are not closing quickly enough. Leaders are now tracking the academic progress that disadvantaged students make during Key Stage 4 and 5 more rigorously. Leaders have rightly set demanding targets for all students in these key stages. In the sixth form, disadvantaged students are making good progress and are on track to meet their targets. Senior leaders effectively use information about disadvantaged students' progress to challenge heads of department to make improvements. However, leaders, including heads of department, have not applied the same rigour to improving disadvantaged students' achievement in Key Stage 3.

The overall gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others is closing in Key Stage 4 and has closed in Key Stage 5. Year 11 disadvantaged students are on track to achieve better in their GCSE examinations in 2015. Their progress in English has accelerated because of a range of effective approaches, including teachers' improved feedback to students and leaders' close monitoring of the quality of teaching. According to the academy's own data about students' progress, the achievement of disadvantaged students in subjects such as humanities, science and modern languages has improved. However, the gap between the progress of disadvantaged students and others remains too wide in mathematics. In Year 11, less than half of disadvantaged students make expected progress in mathematics, compared to nearly three quarters of other students. In particular, less-able disadvantaged students do not achieve well enough in mathematics.

Disadvantaged students' progress during Key Stage 3 is too inconsistent. In mathematics and English, the progress disadvantaged students make varies too much between different year groups. In mathematics, the progress of disadvantaged students is slower in Years 8 and 9 than in Year 7. However, in English it is slower in Year 7 than in Years 8 and 9. Teachers in a small minority of mathematics classes are not providing work that is sufficiently challenging for disadvantaged students.

Leaders are not focusing enough on ensuring those disadvantaged students who fall behind in mathematics and English in Key Stage 3 catch up with their peers.

The attendance of a minority of disadvantaged Key Stage 4 students is poor, despite the academy's efforts. This is a barrier to these students' success. Certain disadvantaged students do not attend additional sessions for English and mathematics designed to help them catch up with enough regularity. Despite having detailed plans in place, leaders have not yet successfully gained the support of some parents to ensure that targeted disadvantaged students attend additional classes. However, the academy works effectively with the carers of looked after children. As a result, in 2014 looked after children achieved well and continued their education post-16.

The academy's leaders are successfully improving the attendance of Key Stage 3 disadvantaged students, through providing clubs and extra-curricular activities as an incentive to attend the academy. Additional support provided for Year 7 disadvantaged students, which they start receiving in Year 6, is having a positive impact on their attendance and attitudes to learning. However, additional activities are not yet having a positive impact on disadvantaged students' achievement in mathematics in Years 8 and 9 and English in Year 7. Senior leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of which extra activities are most effectively helping Key Stage 3 disadvantaged students to meet their academic targets. Some heads of year are, however, usefully evaluating the impact of these activities. The impact of academic mentoring to support students is not as positive in Key Stage 3 as it is in Key Stage 4. Some Key Stage 3 students commented that they did not understand the purpose of mentoring. Leaders do not routinely check the quality and impact of academic mentoring rigorously enough.

In a small number of mixed ability and lower ability sets, where there is a high proportion of disadvantaged students, a minority of students disrupt the learning of others. Consequently, some disadvantaged students' progress slows. The academy's leaders have not taken swift enough action to improve the behaviour of some students in these classes.

Until recently, governors have not focused sufficiently on the current progress of disadvantaged students. They have not routinely analysed the in-year tracking data provided by the academy or used it to challenge the academy's leaders to make immediate improvements. Following 2014 GCSE results, however, governors analysed the achievement of disadvantaged students and rightly challenged the academy's leaders to do better by, for example, further increasing the total number of specialist staff in English, mathematics and science. Some governors routinely question leaders about the gaps in the disadvantaged students' achievement. However, this more rigorous approach is not yet fully developed.

### **External support**

The academy belongs to the West of Oxfordshire Learning Partnership which provides school-to-school support and challenge. The reviews of the academy

conducted by partner schools do not have sharp enough focus on disadvantaged students' achievement and attendance. However, an external consultant has worked successfully with the head of English to help ensure underachieving students catch-up and this had led to improvements for this group.

**The strengths in the academy's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are:**

- Leaders are rigorously tracking the progress disadvantaged students make in Key Stages 4 and 5, so they are better able to challenge heads of departments to account for any gaps between the progress of disadvantaged students and others.
- The positive impact of the Key Stage 3 extra-curricular clubs and activities, on improving the attendance of Year 7 disadvantaged students.
- The improvements carried out by the head of English, including more effective monitoring of the quality of teaching which is raising the achievement of disadvantaged students in Key Stage 4.
- Where leaders have successfully gained parents' support in allowing targeted disadvantaged students in Key Stage 4 to attend additional mathematics and English classes, the achievement of these students is improving.
- The system some heads of year have set up to evaluate the impact of additional activities on disadvantaged students' academic achievement.
- The effective way the academy engages the carers of looked after children so they support the academy's requests to allow students to attend additional classes before and after school.

**The weaknesses in the academy's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are:**

- In Key Stage 3, the progress of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics is too variable across year groups. Disadvantaged students who need additional help in mathematics are not being identified, nor supported soon enough.
- In mathematics in Key Stage 4, less-able disadvantaged students do not make enough progress because leaders have not given sufficient focus to improving the achievement of this group.

- In classes where there is a higher proportion of disadvantaged students, learning is sometimes disrupted by the behaviour of a minority of students.
- The poor attendance of a minority of Key Stage 4 disadvantaged students and the irregular attendance of targeted disadvantaged students at additional classes before and after school.
- Inconsistencies in leaders' approaches to evaluating the impact of additional activities on disadvantaged students' achievement, have led to a lack of clarity about the activities that are helping most.
- Heads of years' and senior leaders' evaluation of the impact of the mentoring which targeted disadvantaged students access is not sharp enough.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged Key Stage 4 students, and further enhance parents' support to ensure that targeted students regularly attend additional classes before and after school.
- Ensure that leaders monitor the behaviour of classes where there is a high proportion of disadvantaged students and take swift action where behaviour needs to improve.
- Make sure that mathematics teachers identify disadvantaged students who are falling behind in Key Stage 3 earlier, and provide these students with the additional help they need to meet their targets more promptly.
- Improve the progress that less-able disadvantaged students make in mathematics in Key Stage 4.
- Ensure greater consistency in the way senior leaders and heads of year evaluate the impact of additional activities on disadvantaged students' achievement so they have a better understanding of what works best.
- Establish more rigour in the way senior leader and heads of year monitor the academic mentoring that targeted Key Stage 3 students receive.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**