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Dr Martina Lecky
The Headteacher
Ruislip High School
Sidmouth Drive
Ruislip
HA4 0BY

Dear Dr Lecky

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Ruislip High School

Following my visit to your academy on 7 May 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

I met with the headteacher, representatives of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of pupils and staff. I met with the headteacher of the virtual school in Hillingdon and with a consultant who has been working with the academy on improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. I scrutinised a range of documents relating to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils including minutes of governor meetings, personal education plans, anonymised performance management files, attendance data and personal education plans.

Context

Ruislip High School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2014. When the predecessor school, also called Ruislip High School, was last inspected it was judged to be outstanding overall. The academy is an 11 to 18 school and is of average size. Around one in six students is eligible for free school meals; this is lower than the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average and is made up of small proportions of students from a

variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately one in six students speaks English as an additional language. This is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average. During the last year there have been a significant number of staffing changes. A significant number of staff currently at the academy have a temporary contract or are employed on a supply basis.

Main findings

Leaders, governors and staff recognise the need for improved outcomes for disadvantaged students. A thorough evaluation of the impact of pupil premium expenditure for the previous academic year has not been done. Leaders and governors are therefore uncertain about the success of different initiatives. Nevertheless, they have reflected upon possible causes for the disparity between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers and have refined existing practice and introduced other initiatives. An example is the creation of a family liaison officer, charged with engaging with parents and carers to improve attendance. Early data show that this is having some impact.

In the past, predictions made by teachers about the outcomes of students have not been accurate. The academy continues to work on making these more reliable, but leaders and governors acknowledge that significant uncertainty remains. Historically, the performance of disadvantaged students in relation to their peers in the academy and nationally has been variable. Data for 2013 showed improvements in the achievement of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics, but this pattern was not sustained in 2014. Current predictions indicate that disadvantaged students will make significant gains in the forthcoming examinations and gaps in achievement in comparison to others at the academy and nationally will reduce. While leaders believe that intervention and support strategies will have an effect, they lack confidence in the accuracy of projections and are not secure as to the exact degree by which achievement of disadvantaged students will improve.

The governing body is taking action to address gaps in achievement. Two governors now oversee pupil premium funding and they are beginning to hold leaders to greater account. They have secured the services of a new clerk to ensure minutes of meetings accurately reflect discussion. Governors acknowledge that they need to challenge leaders further to ensure rapid improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged students. This needs to be systematic and structured, with clear timelines of what is to be achieved, and by when.

The academy does not routinely compare where disadvantaged students move on to after leaving school in relation to their peers, and leaders acknowledge this as an area of further development. The academy does gather data on students as they arrive from primary school and uses these data to help identify those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The 'core kick-start' programme, run by the academy in Year 7, aims to improve levels of literacy and numeracy and supports many students

from a disadvantaged background. The evaluation of this programme is well documented and shows clear impact.

External support

The local authority works well with the academy and ensures effective provision for the small number of looked after children. The virtual headteacher has provided training for key staff at the academy and has attended personal education plan reviews.

The academy employs the services of an external consultant who has provided some evaluation of the performance of disadvantaged students. This has helped academy leaders to identify attendance as an area for improvement and to take action accordingly.

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

- The provision for looked after children is effective. A strong sense of inclusion means that a wide range of parties, including students and their carers, is involved in regular and purposeful reviews. These focus on both achievement and well-being.
- Disadvantaged students in Year 7, on the school's 'core kick-start programme', benefit from increased levels of literacy, numeracy and parental engagement.
- Governors recognise the need to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students and are taking action to tackle this.

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

- A range of systems are in place to track the achievement of students, but leaders are not confident in the accuracy of the data. This lack of reliability means they are unable to confirm that gaps are closing rapidly.
- An evaluation of pupil premium expenditure has not been carried out and leaders and governors are therefore not able to precisely ascertain its impact.
- The destinations of disadvantaged students after leaving school are not routinely analysed and compared to others in the academy.

Priorities for further improvement

- Develop a coherent strategic plan to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students in relation to their peers and others nationally,

rapidly. This needs to include clear indicators of success and timescales so that leaders and governors can monitor and evaluate the impact of pupil premium expenditure effectively. The plan needs to be developed and implemented with the utmost urgency.

- Leaders should review systems for quality assurance to ensure they have greater confidence in the accuracy and reliability of teacher assessments.

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

Yours sincerely

Sai Patel
Her Majesty's Inspector