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19 June 2015

Mrs Nicola Fielding  
Headteacher  
Hendon Brook School  
Hendon Brook  
Townhouse Road  
Nelson  
Lancashire  
BB9 8BP

Dear Mrs Fielding

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hendon Brook School, Lancashire**

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2015, 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 March 2015. 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 good practice in teaching, learning and assessment already seen in some areas of the school, is shared with all teachers so that pupils make good progress across the school
- ensure that teachers and leaders and, as a result, their pupils, benefit from opportunities to observe and share good practice in teaching, learning and assessment in other good and outstanding schools
- refine the action plan to ensure that all actions are matched clearly to improvements in the rate of pupils' progress and or the standards pupils reach.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, teachers, pupils, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan, along with the governance improvement plan, was evaluated. I scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school. I also observed learning taking place and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work along with a range of documents provided by the school.

## **Context**

One additional teacher and two additional teaching assistants have been appointed on temporary contracts. The raising of the staff numbers has been in response to an increase in pupil numbers. New outdoor play equipment has been installed. This has made a significant improvement to the quality of the outdoor learning environment, compared to before the inspection.

## **Main findings**

Leaders have taken decisive action to raise standards by improving the quality of teaching across the school. Leaders have implemented a systematic approach to their assessment of pupils' progress. Information gleaned from leaders' assessment of pupils' progress is passed quickly to teachers. Teachers, in turn, are beginning to ensure their teaching is more focussed on the specific needs of pupils.

The headteacher, along with other leaders, has drawn up an action plan which is succinct and to the point. Key actions are accurately mapped out and being used well by leaders to steer the school towards becoming good. However, not all the identified actions can be assessed in terms of their impact on pupils' progress because they are not linked to pupils' outcomes. Leaders are therefore not in a position to evaluate accurately whether or not their actions benefit the pupils.

Leaders have introduced a whole school system to assess the progress of pupils. Leaders' frequent collection of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is beginning to pay dividends. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning more quickly than they did before the inspection. Leaders' records show that many teachers are beginning to refine their planning for lessons so that they can meet the specific needs of their pupils. Scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work shows that some pupils make rapid progress because they are building on their previous learning. For example, one pupil improved his literacy skills because he was challenged to move on from completing a rhyming poem to using alliteration to make sentences more interesting.

Leaders have introduced a whole school approach to raising the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils. Consequently, pupils understand precisely what they have done well. Pupils spoken with felt that their teacher's written comments are helpful in

ensuring they know how well they were progressing. However, in a few instances teachers miss the opportunity to either embed a pupils' learning or to challenge pupils to reach even higher standards. Evidence in pupils' work books shows that while teachers set additional challenging tasks for many pupils to complete, they do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring pupils respond appropriately; as a consequence their progress falters.

Governors have acted without delay to ensure they are placed well to hold leaders to account. Governors, with the support of the local authority, have identified a national leader of governance to conduct an external review of governance. Governors have also introduced a methodical approach to their visits to school so that each of their actions has a clear focus. As a result, governors have a more accurate picture of the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' outcomes compared to before the inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Leaders are using effectively their links with the local authority. Additional financial support given by the local authority has enabled the local authority school improvement officer to increase his time spent at the school. This has enabled leaders to remain focussed on moving the school to good.

Links have been established with other outstanding schools. Leaders have observed good practice in one other school. As a result the school's system to assess students' progress is more rigorous compared to before the inspection. Governors have taken part in training, alongside other local schools, to improve their knowledge of the Ofsted inspection framework.

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

Yours sincerely

Drew Crawshaw

**Her Majesty's Inspector**