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Dr K O'Hagan
Headteacher
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Dear Dr O'Hagan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Royton and Crompton School

Following my visit to the school on 19 November 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 June 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 in order to become a good school. I agree with your evaluation that further action is needed to:

- Increase the attainment of boys in each subject and year group so that it at least matches the girls' above-average attainment.
- Increase the attainment of students who are known to be disadvantaged so that it at least matches the attainment of other pupils nationally. (Disadvantaged students are deemed to be those who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.)
- Make sure all governors have access to better-quality reports written by external school improvement partners so that they have a more precise knowledge of students' outcomes in each year and each subject.

Evidence

We discussed some of the actions you and the staff have already taken to improve the school and some of your plans for the coming year. I met with a representative of the local authority and two members of the governing body. To glean the views of students I met with the Junior Executive, which comprises representatives from each year group.

Main findings

The school has continued to make progress. The governors, headteacher and senior leaders wasted no time in establishing plans to tackle the weaknesses identified in the most recent inspection.

Standards rose at the end of 2015 and students made better progress. Middle leaders' work over the last two years to improve the quality of teaching in their departments is proving to be effective. Standards in business studies, geography and languages, highlighted as weaker subjects at the inspection, have all risen. You have accurately identified that there remains an issue with boys' attainment lagging below girls' attainment in a number of subjects, particularly English and mathematics. You have also accurately identified that students who are known to be disadvantaged attain less than other pupils nationally. It is important that over the next year there is a focus across the school, in each year group and subject, on raising boys' and disadvantaged students' attainment.

Students that spoke with me said that there have been some significant improvements in the summer and since the inspection.

- As one student said, reflecting the views of others, 'Everything is more professional now.'
- Teachers' feedback, including marking, is helping them to make better progress and to know what to do to improve. They have the chance to edit and improve their work to make sure they fully understand key parts of the subject before they move on.
- Students feel more involved in the life of the school and in the decisions that are being taken on their behalf. The Junior Executive collects and collates pupils' views and works with the headteacher to make improvements.
- They are now expected to present their planners in every lesson and this is followed up rigorously by staff.
- Work is more challenging. There is higher expectation from teachers and this is borne out in more frequent homework, and higher expectations of homework.
- Staff are more visible around the school, particularly senior staff, and this has helped to improve behaviour.
- As one student said, 'Teachers are hotter on attendance.' The group also noted that students do not pretend to be ill, as they have done in the past, to

get out of lessons. They are told by teachers what they have missed and, as one student said, 'This puts absence into perspective.'

Changes to improvement planning have been effective. You set improvement objectives, with each senior leader, fortnightly. You then follow this up with discussions to evaluate the impact of the actions they have taken and set new objectives for the next two weeks. This means there is greater focus on more rapid improvement and a greater sense of responsibility and accountability. There has been a successful re-focus on leaders thinking about students' progress and learning rather than on the coverage of the curriculum and schemes of work.

External support

Since the inspection there has been limited external support and only a little impact. The school's improvement adviser has provided additional guidance, training and support to teachers who lead subjects. This external view has helped leaders to corroborate and evaluate the actions they are taking. Some of the development points in the report are too imprecise to enable the governing body to decide whether improvements have or have not been effective. There is an over-focus on examination preparation rather than on students' learning in the different subjects. Senior leaders from North Chadderton School have provided an analysis of teaching and are looking to revisit the school to provide more guidance for leaders. The value of the written reports from external sources is diminished because they are too general and are not circulated to all governors.

The local authority's health and safety professionals have conducted a site survey on the state of the astroturf. They have provided useful recommendations to improve the facilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector