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Mr Christopher Bennet  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Bennet

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's School**

Following my visit to your academy on 4 December 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection, the academy was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

I met with you and other senior leaders, heads of year and the heads of English and mathematics, four members of the governing body and a group of pupils. I reviewed information on pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. You accompanied me to a number of lessons to observe disadvantaged pupils' learning. I scrutinised a sample of disadvantaged pupils' books. I evaluated the quality of the academy's improvement planning. This visit focused particularly on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

## **Context**

Two members of the senior leadership team have left the academy and have not been replaced. The head of English has stepped down from her role and the head of humanities has also become the acting head of English. Twenty-two teachers left the academy over the summer. The systems for gathering and analysing information on pupils' achievement have been updated. You have restructured the academy's pastoral system so that every year group now has its own head of year.

## **Main findings**

The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE in 2015 fell from 45% to 39%. Leaders had forecast a rise in attainment. The academy acquired a small number of pupils into this cohort from a pupil referral unit that had closed, and many of these pupils had a history of poor attendance. You also presented achievement information with these pupils removed from their analysis, which presents a slightly better picture. However, even when this small group of low-attending pupils is removed, the information indicates an unacceptable widening gap between disadvantaged pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics compared to their non-disadvantaged peers nationally.

Much of your time since the previous inspection has been taken up with setting up systems to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the academy. Many of these systems were not in place prior to your appointment. Equally, the quality of teaching was not being evaluated rigorously and the quality of teaching was poor. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress were too generous and governance was weak. All of this has distracted you and other academy leaders from making the gains one would expect a year after the first monitoring inspection.

Systems are now in place to analyse the quality of teaching in fine detail. You now know where the weakest and strongest teaching is to be found and have mapped out a typical learning experience for every disadvantaged pupil over the week. This means that you can provide a greater degree of support and challenge to teachers and subject leaders. However, weak teaching still exists in science and mathematics in particular, and some disadvantaged pupils with whom I met expressed their ongoing concerns about the progress they are making in these subjects. Although teaching has steadily improved over time, some is inadequate and too much still requires improvement. Heads of year demonstrated an understanding of how to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils better, and provided details of support and intervention, but it is too early to measure the impact of these.

The heads of English and mathematics have reflected on why progress has stalled in their subjects. Too many pupils in mathematics who were assessed to be working at a borderline C/D grade were wrongly given the opportunity to attempt the higher level examination, and not enough of them were successful. Weak teaching in English last year led to disadvantaged pupils achieving relatively poor outcomes

compared to their peers. To address this shortfall, additional teaching groups have been created in English, and pupils' work is now more regularly moderated by a number of teachers from within the department and then checked externally.

You are monitoring the behaviour and attendance of disadvantaged pupils more regularly. Typically, disadvantaged pupils attend less regularly than their peers and behave less well than other pupils in the academy. However, information gathered over time indicates that this picture is steadily improving. The appointment of a family worker and the use of mentors are contributing to improving behaviour and attendance. The quality of careers guidance has also improved. All but 1% of pupils who completed their education at Key Stage 4 in 2015 continued in education, employment or training. The very few who did not were disadvantaged pupils.

Governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been used to best effect, as the gaps in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers have not closed.

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

### **External support**

The academy has brokered the support of external education consultants to conduct reviews of the quality of teaching and learning. It has also worked with other schools so that they can validate teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**