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Dr Ian Butterfield  
Hindley High School  
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Dear Dr Butterfield

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hindley High School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 April 2016, 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 October 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 previous section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the rates of pupils' progress in English more rapidly
- ensure that all staff are challenging the most-able pupils, in both key stages 3 and 4, in order for them to make the best possible progress
- evaluate the impact of leaders' actions more effectively.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, the vice-chair of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and two groups of pupils. I looked at the work of a small number of pupils. I evaluated the school action plan and scrutinised other key documentation. I also had the opportunity to accompany you on a tour of the school.

## **Context**

Three new teaching and learning posts have been created and these staff took up their roles at Easter. Also from Easter, there have been changes to the staffing structure in the English department. A lead practitioner and a key stage 3 intervention leader have been appointed, and the key stage 4 coordinator has taken on the role of head of department. An assistant head is still the director of English, but now has a more strategic role leading teaching and learning across the school.

## **Main findings**

You have created an action plan which effectively focuses on the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. You provided me with clear evidence of the actions that leaders have taken over the last six months. However, you have not given a high enough priority to evaluating the impact of these actions. Doing this more effectively will enable you to assess whether you are where you need to be on your improvement journey as you move towards the school's next section 5 inspection.

You have changed the way you analyse the data you gather about pupils' progress. The new system enables leaders and class teachers to use this information more effectively. For example, at a departmental level, middle leaders use the information to target support for pupils to help them make better progress. It also informs the fortnightly meetings that take place between heads of department and their link senior leader. The new departmental 'health checks' enable middle leaders to be more involved in and accountable for reviewing the strengths and areas for improvement in their own subjects.

Current data for Year 11 indicates that while rates of progress in English and mathematics are set to increase, they are still likely to be below national averages. The significant projected improvement in English is particularly pleasing as this has been a high priority following last year's disappointing outcomes in this subject.

Although outcomes in English are improving, you are aware that this is not happening at a fast enough pace. The new appointments and changes to the staffing structure in this department demonstrate your commitment to accelerating progress in English. The appointment of a key stage 3 intervention leader in English reflects the high priority you are now giving to ensuring that pupils make good progress during their early years of secondary education.

You are also aware that the achievement of the most-able pupils remains a cause for concern. Too few Year 11 pupils are predicted to attain the highest GCSE grades at the end of this year. Leaders must ensure that all staff are challenging the most-able in order for them to make the best possible progress from Year 7 onwards.

Governors now receive clear information about the progress of all year groups. They value the accessible way that this is presented to them, but are keen to improve their expertise in analysing achievement data by receiving more training in this area. Minutes of meetings show that governors are using this information to ask more searching questions of senior leaders. Governors are considering setting up a standards committee, which will work more closely with senior leaders in the analysis of this data. Although governors are working more sharply, they need to ensure that they are always challenging senior leaders about the impact of their actions.

The professional development programme shows that there has been a strong focus on supporting teachers to improve their practice. Comments from some of the key stage 3 pupils I spoke to show that this is making a difference to their learning. They feel that teachers are explaining things more clearly and giving them feedback that helps them to improve. As one pupil said, 'teachers are doing more fun things, which helps us to learn'.

### **External support**

The school has benefited from the support networks that exist within the local authority. Working with a local teaching school, three leaders have been trained to deliver two teaching programmes to identified cohorts of teachers. One of these six-week programmes is starting this month and the other at the end of May. Specialist leaders in education from a neighbouring outstanding school have delivered training sessions to all staff on challenge and questioning. You feel that the link local authority officer works well with the school and helps you and other leaders to reflect on your actions. Following my visit, this relationship will focus more sharply on how he can help you to evaluate the impact of these actions.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wigan. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**