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Mr Anthony Ryan
Headteacher
Chiswick School
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Dear Mr Ryan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chiswick School

Following my visit to your school on 13 May 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 November 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- develop detailed analysis of achievement and attendance information in order to link teaching and support clearly to outcomes, particularly for underperforming groups
- ensure that the school's action plan accurately records the outcomes of actions taken, so that governors are able to precisely monitor and evaluate progress being made.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, your data manager and the chair of the governing body and five members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's and governors' action plans were evaluated. I also met with the school's consultant who

is supporting improvement in the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. I looked at your updated arrangements for safeguarding, use of the pupil premium funding, assessment information documents and minutes of governors' meetings. I joined senior leaders to observe learning in lessons and spoke to pupils during lessons and at breaktime.

Context

Since the last inspection, a number of staff have left the school and some will be leaving at the end of this school year. The governing body has completed its restructuring, which followed an initial review that was conducted prior to the last inspection. This has involved redefining the governors' terms of reference and giving each of them specific areas of responsibility. The school has employed an external consultant to lead a review of the effectiveness of the special educational needs department, which will be completed this summer. Leaders are currently exploring opportunities to link with other local schools in order to share expertise at leadership and governor level.

Main findings

The school's action plan is well focused upon the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. Governors' roles have been reviewed as part of the governing body's restructuring and leaders now have a link governor whom they meet with regularly to check on progress against the school's action plan. There continues to be a need for a more systematic approach to monitoring the effect of actions to ensure that they are always timely and their effect is precisely measured. However, this being said, governors are increasingly confident in questioning accurately and in challenging the information provided by leaders. Assessment information is now focused upon the progress of all pupils and groups, providing accurate comparisons with national statistics. Governors' increasingly refined monitoring of all aspects of the school's performance, including the performance of groups of pupils and the school's arrangements for safeguarding and finance, means that leaders expect to be challenged. Consequently, leaders are held to account more stringently for the effect that their actions are having on the school's improvement overall.

The school's assessment system has been completely refocused upon the progress made by pupils from their starting points. Leaders are developing a culture and a system where, from the moment they join the school, pupils have a clearer sense of what their progress targets are and how they are doing. This is developing well. Many pupils are already adept at using the system, comparing their current performance with their targets and increasingly knowing how to bridge any gaps. This system allows leaders and teachers the capacity to analyse assessment information and respond to emerging trends with rapid and focused interventions. However, this system is still embedding, and while some subject leaders have already become well versed in how to get the most out of it, others are yet to make the same advances in supporting planning that best meets pupils' needs.

The provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is currently undergoing a comprehensive review with the support of an external consultant. The consultant has been given a clear mandate by you to identify strengths and weaknesses, challenge underperformance and report on progress, which will inform your next steps. Leaders recognise where deficiencies exist and have taken full account of the latest government guidance to inform their plans and actions. Expectations for this group of vulnerable pupils are now higher, leaders having raised the bar regarding outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The expectation is now that this group should make accelerated progress towards the same aspirational target grades as their peers. The expertise of teachers and other adults who work with this vulnerable group is being enhanced through a carefully planned and targeted programme of training. While these actions have had limited effect to date to accelerate the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, teachers are beginning to use assessment information to identify pupils' needs and to plan accordingly.

The provision, analysis and response to reliable information regarding the progress of disadvantaged pupils now inform the actions of senior and middle leaders and teachers. Interventions outside lessons are now better coordinated and reviewed, but leaders recognise that further work needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils' progress within lessons is better. While the difference in the performance of disadvantaged pupils is not improving as quickly as leaders and governors want, the system is in place to allow all staff to support quick improvements in pupils' outcomes. You have drawn upon external support to review the effectiveness of the pupil premium funding, which is resulting in new plans being drawn up ready for next year. The system has also helped leaders identify other underperforming groups, namely Black Caribbean and White British boys, whose performance is now also closely monitored.

Leaders and governors recognise that while systems are now in place and beginning to embed firmly, work remains to ensure that their ambition is borne out by improved outcomes for all groups of pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Leaders are rightly impatient for further progress and keen to drive improvements that have a sustained impact, ensuring that all pupils are offered learning opportunities that meet their needs.

External support

The school has drawn upon external support to help you further enhance arrangements for safeguarding and to evaluate the use of pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils). This has improved the way leaders systematically review these areas of the school and has already informed your planning well. You maintain effective links with the local authority, which provides services that form part of the school's pastoral support

systems. You have contracted an external consultant to lead the review of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Tiplin
Her Majesty's Inspector