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Mr D Meredith
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Dear Mr Meredith

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Perryfields High School Specialist Maths and Computing College

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 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 December 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.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure action planning documents provide sharply measurable targets against which the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching can be monitored and evaluated precisely by leaders and governors.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I undertook brief visits to a number of

lessons, accompanied by members of the senior leadership team, and looked at examples of pupils' work. I evaluated a range of documents and records, including the school's improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings and information regarding the expected outcomes of pupils currently at the school.

Context

Since the previous inspection in December 2015, you have restructured the roles of members of the senior leadership team. You have included lead teachers in some aspects of senior leadership. The school currently receives external support from the local authority and from Wood Green Academy Teaching School Alliance. Successful recruitment of staff has resulted in several recent appointments. Further new staff are due to join the school at the start of the coming academic year. Some of these appointments have been in subjects identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. You expect the school to be fully staffed from September 2016.

Main findings

Leaders and governors have responded swiftly to the outcomes of the previous inspection. The findings of the inspection have been used to further improve processes to monitor the quality of teaching at the school and strengthen marking and moderation of pupils' work. Leaders also now more closely target the support and guidance given to sixth form learners when they fall behind. The impact of leaders' work is demonstrated in school monitoring information by improvements in pupil outcomes.

The school's evidence demonstrates improvements to the quality of teaching. In my short visit to classrooms, I saw teachers drawing on a variety of methods to assess the progress pupils were making. They were using this information effectively to inform discussion, questions and the direction of the learning. For example, Year 7 pupils were providing regular feedback to their teacher in mathematics. The teacher used this information to determine whether to practise more examples of a particular calculation or to move on.

Leaders have improved the way the quality of teaching is monitored by successfully refining current systems. Senior and middle leaders use information from a variety of sources, including observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and analysing progress information. As a result, leaders can judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Analysis of this information informs the themes for training sessions; for example, on how to provide challenge for the most able pupils, or on ways to develop skills in answering examination questions for sixth form learners. These sessions are well received and valued by teachers. Where senior leaders judge that individual teachers require improvement, successful support is provided which is informed by teachers' specific development needs.

Middle leaders are robustly held to account by senior leaders. Heads of department take an important role in improving the quality of teaching and learning and pupil outcomes in the subjects for which they are responsible. Development of the skills of middle leadership has, in some cases, been further supported by partnership with a nearby teaching school. Middle leaders reinforce the importance of considering the impact of their work over time, for example through the analysis of pupil progress information with teachers in their departments.

Leaders carefully monitor the progress learners make towards their targets in 16 to 19 study programmes. When leaders identify learners who are not making the progress expected, additional support and guidance is provided that focuses on academic, social or emotional support. Learners who have received this additional support have shown increased rates of progress as a result.

Your recent analysis of assessment information for Year 11 and for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes shows that their achievements are improving compared with results in 2015. You have taken steps to ensure the accuracy and validity of assessment information through introducing dedicated time for teachers to check their marking with each other, and draw on the expertise of the most experienced colleagues. As a result, assessment information produced by the school provides a validated picture of the outcomes expected this summer.

Governors are committed to improving the school and they provide effective support and challenge to the school's leaders. The information you provide enables them to check the work of the school for themselves and ask searching questions about the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils. The work of governors could be further strengthened by ensuring documents provided to them, such as the school's development plan, include clear, measurable targets against which they can monitor precisely the impact of actions taken.

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

External support

Effective external support has been provided by the local authority. The local authority's school improvement adviser regularly reviews the progress leaders make towards the areas for development identified at the last inspection and reviews the school's self-evaluation document. He holds an accurate view of progress being made by school leaders. You have also commissioned support from Wood Green Academy Teaching School Alliance to work with senior and middle leaders to improve rates of progress and support leaders and teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath
Her Majesty's Inspector