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Mark Jackman
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Dear Mr Jackman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Yateley School

Following my visit to your school on 10 October 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 2016. 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:

- improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance, so that the proportion who are persistently absent from school decreases
- sharpen the evaluation of the school's current progress towards its action plan targets, so that efforts are focused on what will make a difference most rapidly
- continue to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the broader curriculum, so that they achieve outcomes which are as good as other pupils nationally with the same starting points.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, members of your senior leadership team, middle leaders, governors and pupils. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. I visited lessons in mathematics, science and humanities along with the assistant

headteacher. I also reviewed a range of documentation, including governor minutes, local authority visit reports, and the school's information about pupils' progress and on leaders' monitoring of teaching.

Context

Since the inspection which judged the school to require improvement, there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff, most significantly in science and modern foreign languages. During the spring and summer term of 2016, the capacity of the senior leadership team was reduced by the absence of two assistant headteachers. A new assistant headteacher responsible for teaching and learning joined the school in September 2016.

Main findings

Since the inspection, you and your staff have worked hard to improve the school. You have embraced the areas for improvement that were identified, and made a noticeable difference to a number of key areas. This was reflected by pupils and middle leaders who spoke positively about their school and how it is getting better.

Pupils recognise that their behaviour has 'massively improved' as a result of clear routines and expectations now being consistently in place. Pupils understand why good behaviour is important for them to be able to learn successfully, and what the consequences of poor behaviour will be. Teachers use systems effectively to manage the behaviour of pupils in their classroom, and are held to account for their actions. The atmosphere in classrooms is calm and purposeful. Pupils and teachers have respectful relationships that help them work together.

Strengthened middle and senior leadership is supporting improvements across the school. Staff are held to account increasingly for the progress of the pupils they teach. Middle leaders monitor their faculty areas regularly, using what they learn to direct future development work with their subject staff. Assessment of pupils' current progress is more accurate, as a result of staff training and moderation. This information is now shared more widely and efficiently as a tool for identifying underachievement and targeting further work. Governors hold school leaders increasingly to account, undertaking clear roles linked to specific aspects of school improvement. Governors' questioning helps them deepen their understanding of leaders' work, but they could challenge more to be clear about the measurable difference that is being made to pupils' outcomes, particularly those who are disadvantaged and in relation to persistent absence.

Results for pupils who finished Year 11 in 2015 and 2016 show a rapidly improving picture. Pupils make good progress across a broad range of subjects over the course of key stage 3 and 4. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement is improving, with the difference between their results and that of their peers in school diminishing. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not as good in all subjects and leaders do not look closely enough at these differences to identify where further

improvement is needed.

The visits to classrooms I carried out with the assistant headteacher showed the improvements to learning and teaching that are identified through leaders' ongoing monitoring. The work that pupils carry out in lessons is helping them to build on their prior learning and apply it in different ways. Subject teams work closely together to share good practice and develop the expertise of individual teachers, as they develop courses in response to the introduction of new GCSE course requirements. Opportunities to share good practice quickly and effectively across the wider school are not used to best effect. The assistant headteacher who leads learning and teaching is new in his post, having arrived at the school in September 2016. He quickly identified strengths and areas for development across the school and has appropriate and structured plans in place to build rapidly on the strengths which are becoming increasingly evident.

The action plan identifies specific activities linked to clear deadlines and staff who are responsible for them, making it easy for you, your governors and leadership team to monitor progress. Sometimes the plan is focused on completing actions, rather than the difference these actions are making to pupils' achievements. This means improvements are not always as rapid as they could be, for example in relation to disadvantaged pupils' attendance and progress.

Leaders recognise that improvements to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have not been significant since the inspection in November 2015. Leaders know pupils well, and work hard to meet their individual needs. They use a range of strategies and seek advice from outside school about what else they can do, but know that future actions need to have greater impact, so that fewer disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent from school.

External support

The local authority provides useful support and challenge to the school. Plans for school improvement have been sharpened with support from the local authority lead learning partner, who visits to review progress, and evaluates accurately the strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors and school leaders make good use of resources from beyond the school to provide extra capacity in areas where it is most needed, such as through subject network groups and advisory support for special educational needs and/or disabilities provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector