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Mr J Fletcher  
The Beaconsfield School  
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Dear Mr Fletcher

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Beaconsfield School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 May 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- continue to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils by using assessment information effectively to rapidly identify and effectively address any underachievement
- strengthen and embed fully the school's assessment systems in all subjects
- improve the quality of teaching, especially in English, by sharing and building on the school's good practice and improvements to teaching in science and mathematics.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, the chair of governors and a representative from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust. Together,

you and I visited a range of lessons in core subjects to observe learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. I also met with a group of pupils and with middle leaders. I took into account a range of other relevant information, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, leaders' checks on standards and the quality of teaching in the school and their information about current pupils' performance. I also considered external reviews of pupil premium funding commissioned by leaders and I reviewed leaders' recruitment checks on adults working in the school.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection in October 2016, there has been a reorganisation of the governing body.

## **Main findings**

You and your leadership team have acted with determination to improve the school. Staff and governors share your ambition to help pupils to be well prepared for their future and ready to take up their place in the world. Leaders' determination to develop consistently effective teaching across the school is the driving force behind pupils' accelerating progress and improved attainment.

After the last inspection, you acted swiftly to commission an external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding and, six months later, initiated a further evaluation of the impact of the action taken. The findings of these reviews have supported you and your team in refining the effectiveness of this aspect of the school's work. As a result, you have strengthened the leadership of the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Your pupil premium improvement plan focuses clearly on achieving the improvements that will make the biggest difference to the outcomes for these pupils. Leaders now review progress against the action plan more frequently, and this helps you to make the best use of resources and maintain a rapid pace to improvement.

Your new chair of governors initiated a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the governing body in 2017. This culminated in a re-structuring of committees and a change to roles and responsibilities. The chair has sought to improve the work of the governing body so that governors can be 'more nimble in their responses'. The governing body has brokered a partnership with a local, successful secondary school to enable governors to receive external validation of leaders' actions to improve the school. Governors now monitor progress carefully, using the more detailed and increasingly accurate information that leaders share with them. They ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve progress rates for disadvantaged pupils, so that the gaps between their performance and that of other pupils nationally are diminished. Leaders' actions are having a positive impact and, as a

result, the gap in 2017 diminished and was broadly in line with national averages. Assessment information for this school year shows that the gap between disadvantaged pupils' achievement and that of other pupils is continuing to narrow, especially in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, you recognise that this aspect of the school's work needs to remain a priority.

Leaders have also, rightly, focused the school's work on reducing the gap between the attainment of boys and girls. Alongside effective subject- and year-group tracking, you are providing additional support for specific boys, including mentoring from staff and older students. This good work is leading to a reduction in the achievement gap between boys and girls in most subjects. The school's good support for Year 7 pupils has ensured that those pupils who did not attain the required standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have now done so. This is helping these pupils to fully access the key stage 3 curriculum.

You have made sensible structural changes to the key stage 4 curriculum, so that pupils can meet the new national expectations by accessing a wider range of subjects. In addition, you have made timetable changes to allow pupils access to extra support, as well as giving more time to core subjects.

You and your leaders continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching across the school. Staff share leaders' sense of urgency in acting to address any weaknesses in teaching. Middle leaders have received external training and support to lead this work across their departments. Internal monitoring records and external validation by St Clement Danes School reflect some significant improvements to the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics and science. However, the pace of improvement in the quality of English teaching has slowed because of changes in staffing. You are taking steps to strengthen the leadership of English through the appointment of a new leader for English who will take up their post in September 2018. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are now more accurate and consistent. This is helping leaders at all levels to track progress and target help more effectively. Nevertheless, this aspect of the school's work is not yet fully embedded in all subjects.

During my visit, the atmosphere around the school was calm and purposeful. Pupils listened attentively in lessons and followed instructions well. They engaged well in class and group discussions, and responded to questions thoughtfully and, sometimes, with a depth to their answers. Pupils talked to me about the useful feedback their teachers give them so that they improve their work. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that there is an adult to turn to if they need help. They said that bullying is rare but, when it does happen, the school is occasionally slow to respond.

## **External support**

The school benefits from effective support and challenge from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust. The school has also commissioned effective support from St Clement Danes School.

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

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier  
**Ofsted Inspector**