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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 26 March 2019, 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 not 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:

- eradicate further the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and ensure that teachers expect the best of pupils, especially in mathematics
- ensure that teachers plan learning that allows pupils to consolidate, practise and embed important knowledge
- ensure that leaders and teachers identify the gaps in pupils' learning, but particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged, to better use additional funding to improve outcomes for pupils.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and I also met formally with other senior leaders, a group of teachers and a group of Year 10 pupils. I spoke with the chair of the governing body. I also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority. During my conversations, I discussed the impact of leaders' actions since the last inspection.

I reviewed the school's single central record of checks on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with pupils. I visited lessons across different subjects, including in mathematics, English and geography. I looked at work in pupils' books. I evaluated the school's improvement plan, as well as the external review of pupil premium funding. I considered a range of school documentation, including leaders' records of attendance.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed. Two new governors have also joined the governing body. An external review of pupil premium funding was carried out in February 2018. There have also been some changes to senior leaders' roles and responsibilities. For instance, the deputy headteacher now checks on how well middle leaders are securing improvements in their subjects.

There have been four new lead practitioners appointed, two in English, one in mathematics and one in science. Two new mathematics teachers have also been appointed, including a new head of department. A further lead practitioner is due to take up post in April 2019.

## **Main findings**

You recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that the school provides a good standard of education. However, the actions that leaders have taken since the previous inspection have not secured improvements quickly enough. Outcomes for those pupils who left the school in 2018 were particularly weak. Pupils made poor progress from their starting points in many subjects, including English and mathematics.

Examination results for key stage 4 show that pupils' rates of progress in 2018 were in the bottom 20% nationally. This was the case in English, mathematics, science and humanities. Disadvantaged pupils who left the school in 2018 made especially poor progress. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics has remained in the bottom 20% nationally for the past two years.

As recommended at the last inspection, a review of the use of the pupil premium

funding took place. This external review took place five months after the inspection. The timing of this review meant that many disadvantaged pupils who left the school in 2018 were unable to benefit enough from the changes that followed. In English and mathematics, differences between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils at the school and other pupils nationally increased.

Leaders were keen to implement the recommendations made in the external review of the school's use of the pupil premium. For example, leaders are now clear about how additional funding is being used. They have also made changes to how the impact is measured. Leaders' strategies to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils are based upon research findings. Nonetheless, leaders' assessment information shows that wide differences in the progress made by these pupils and others remain. This is especially the case for those pupils currently in Year 11. This is because many disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 still have gaps in their learning.

Following the previous inspection, some middle leaders have been able to secure improvements in outcomes for pupils in some subjects. For instance, those pupils who left the school in 2018 made better progress in modern foreign languages than pupils who left the school the year before. Leaders' assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils achieving a standard pass in English and mathematics also increased. However, because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, many pupils in Year 11 are not on track to achieve the standards of which they are capable by the end of key stage 4 in mathematics.

There have been some improvements in the quality of teaching. This is especially the case in geography, where teachers provide pupils with enough opportunities to write at length. Some teachers ensure that pupils can think about their learning and improve the quality of their work. This is especially the case in English. In mathematics, some teachers sequence learning carefully. This allows some pupils to build on their prior knowledge and make stronger progress.

Although there is evidence that the quality of teaching is improving, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. Teachers are asking challenging questions of pupils more often. However, some pupils do not have the knowledge to respond and rise to the challenge. The gaps in their learning are because some teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to practise, consolidate and embed important knowledge. As a result, they are unable to build on and apply this knowledge to more complex tasks. This is especially the case in mathematics. There are also occasions where teachers do not expect the best from pupils. Some teachers accept work from pupils that is poorly presented or low in quality.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND) as a priority. Initially, the rates of attendance for these groups of pupils declined further. Too many pupils continued to be regularly absent from school. For instance, during the last academic year over a quarter of disadvantaged pupils were regularly absent from school. Pupils with SEND were also more likely to be regularly absent from school than their peers.

More recently, leaders have placed a greater emphasis on pupils attending school every day. The importance of good attendance has a higher profile across the school. Leaders have also made improvements to their strategies to check on and improve pupils' rates of attendance. There are also more effective systems to hold leaders and staff to account for pupils' rates of attendance. Pupils and staff explained to me how systems to check on and reduce pupils' rates of absence are more effective. As a result, rates of attendance for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND, have improved.

Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the quality of education. They monitor and review the progress of their improvement plans more regularly. For instance, since September, leaders have improved the systems to hold middle leaders to account. This is allowing senior leaders to identify those aspects of middle leadership that need strengthening further. Consequently, middle leaders have been able to benefit from relevant training and external support. Recent staff appointments are also helping to address the inconsistencies in subject leadership. For example, since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in the leadership of English.

Staff and governors are determined to make Hindley High School a good school. In more recent months, following the appointment of four lead practitioners, and changes to senior leadership roles, the pace of improvement has quickened. However, some of the key issues identified at the previous inspection have not been addressed with sufficient urgency.

### **External support**

Leaders are keen to benefit from and act on recommendations made following external support. The school is receiving a range of support from other local schools and external experts. For example, through the local authority, the school has received support from an external expert in English. In mathematics, staff have had the opportunity to work with and share good practice with colleagues in other local schools.

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

Emma Gregory  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**