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4 December 2015

Richard Marlow  
Headteacher  
Heritage High School  
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Dear Mr Marlow

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heritage High School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 November 2015, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders, governors and Derbyshire local authority are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I spoke with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. I conducted a learning walk of the school and was joined in this by yourself and two associate assistant headteachers. While in lessons I spoke with pupils and looked at their work in books. I spoke formally with a group of Year 11 pupils. I discussed with leaders, the 2015 GCSE results and the school self-evaluation statement.

## **Context**

Since the first monitoring visit conducted in June 2015, there have been changes to the leadership of mathematics and art, design and technology. The restructured senior leadership team is now in place. There is as a new Chair of the Governing Body.

## **Main findings**

In the short time that you have been headteacher you have managed a turbulent time and have had many issues to address. You have not seen the impact on pupils' achievement that was predicted; the GCSE results in 2015 were too low and were not as expected. You told me that the information used to predict this achievement was 'deeply flawed' and that you had uncovered serious inaccuracies, particularly around assessment within mathematics. You are determined to address these issues and we explored at length your line of attack. You told me, 'what was in the past was not good enough.'

A new information system is in place and all staff have received training on this, assessment and target setting. Senior leaders regularly track the progress that pupils are making. There are assessment points every half term and half-termly raising achievement meetings now take place so that subject leaders and their teachers can be held to account. Links have been made with local schools and external moderation is planned in order that assessment can be checked. Pupils told me that they are aware of their targets and that their teachers were speaking with them more regularly about how to achieve these. But there is still a lot of work to do. When we looked at pupils' work in books, there were too many occasions when not enough progress was being made. Although the pupils knew their targets, the quality of work within their books was not of a high enough standard to help them achieve these. There remains a lack of clarity about what progress looks like at subject level and what needs to be taught so that pupils achieve what is expected from their starting points.

The way in which teaching quality is monitored is now much improved. Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve teaching quality and ensure that pupils experience lessons that are more consistent. In the lessons we visited, we saw the use of the 'starred objectives' and evidence of reflection time being effectively spent so that pupils could consolidate their learning. Teaching performance is effectively managed and there is compelling evidence that teaching quality is improving as a result.

In one lesson we saw together, pupils were making progress because the head of the science department, teaching the lesson, had skilfully planned a range of activities that helped move on the knowledge and understanding of each pupil in a way that obviously enthused them all. Pupils told me that they wished all their lessons could be like this one. Not all learning seen was of this quality. In books, we saw work that lacked care and pride from pupils, including those predicted to

achieve A\* grades at GCSE. Too much work was incomplete and there was little evidence of high-quality extended writing. Urgent work is required to raise the expectations of what can be achieved by pupils and what good progress looks like within each curriculum area.

The Year 11 pupils I spoke with were a credit to their school; they clearly appreciate the changes that have taken place since you became headteacher. They recognise that there is now a sharper focus on the progress they need to make in order to achieve the targets they have been set. They did say that there remained some confusion over which target they were aiming for – the teacher prediction or the forecast grade. There can be no confusion – this issue must be resolved.

You told me that behaviour was a strength of the school. Attendance has improved and the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. Pupils told me they felt safe and that they had many people within school that they could approach if they were in difficulty. On my walk around the school, I did see too many pupils on corridors or taking too long to arrive to their lessons. The Year 11 pupils I spoke with said that their learning had been interrupted by the behaviour of others. You and I saw pupils who were insufficiently focused in lessons. The behaviour management systems need tightening so that no learning time is lost.

The new Chair of the Governing Body is driving the improvement agenda and along with the two vice-chairs of the governing body has streamlined and focused the way in which the governing body operates. You told me that you felt appropriately challenged and supported. Governors have an accurate view of the school and the urgency needed to address the barriers that exist to the school becoming a good school. The governing body are a strength of the school.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. You have been proactive in keeping me well informed about the progress the school is making and we have agreed that this will continue. I will appreciate receiving information about predictions for GCSE results in 2016.

### **External support**

The school receives high-quality support from the local authority. This support needs to continue.

You are developing further your links with local schools to support assessment and external moderation.

It is imperative that leaders, including the governing body, closely monitor the quality of the external support received so that evidence is clear about the support that is effective and the support that is not.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire local authority.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman

**Her Majesty's Inspector**