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Mr Douglas Greig
Headteacher
Plumstead Manor School
Old Mill Road
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Dear Mr Greig

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Plumstead Manor School

Following my visit to your school on 10 November 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 March 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Senior leaders should take further action to:

- raise the achievement of identified groups, particularly disadvantaged White British pupils and the most able
- support the governing body and middle leaders to deliver the actions identified on the school development plan
- continue to develop the 16 to 19 programmes of study.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of governors, two other governors, the local authority school improvement partner and middle leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan were evaluated. A joint

learning walk of lessons in mathematics and English was undertaken with the headteacher. A range of documentation provided by the school was evaluated, including the single central record. Pupils were spoken to during informal times and in lessons about their experiences at school.

Context

You were appointed as headteacher of the school six months before the last inspection. Your initial evaluation of the issues faced by the school mirrored those identified by the inspection team. You know the areas that need rapid improvement and have been quick to implement a number of strategic priorities to address these. You have initiated a number of collaborative working relationships with the local authority and other schools in order to increase capacity.

Main findings

You, ably supported by senior leaders, have implemented a number of whole-school initiatives around teaching, learning, assessment and pupils' behaviour. You have restructured the leadership team to raise levels of accountability and ensure that they have the capacity to deliver the necessary improvements. Together you and your leaders have created a detailed school improvement plan that addresses identified concerns and established a culture of trust among the staff and parents. You are not complacent. You and your senior leaders know that improvements need to be swift if they are to have an impact on outcomes for pupils. You are clear that attendance needs to improve still further and that the new school policy on behaviour must be consistently applied by all staff.

A focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in key areas such as mathematics, has already had some impact. Teachers are now consistent in their approach to giving pupils timely and helpful feedback about their work. While still in the early stages, pupils are beginning to verbalise their own evaluations and this supports them in improving their work. A new assessment system has enabled staff to track carefully the progress pupils make. As a result, teachers plan activities with careful regard for pupils' different prior knowledge and skills. A team of leading practitioners ensures that teachers have regular opportunities to share their expertise, and middle leaders, many of whom are new, are increasingly checking that teaching is of a consistently good standard.

School leaders have accurately identified some groups of pupils who are not making appropriate progress. These include disadvantaged White British pupils and some of the most able. They are rightly adopting whole-school strategies to increase the progress made by all pupils, but particularly these identified groups. Leaders are not just focusing on examination classes but have instigated a number of projects across all year groups and subjects. For instance, the Flying Start Programme at key stage 3 has already had a significant impact on the progress made by

disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 8. However, leaders know that far more needs to be done to close the gaps in learning between these groups and other pupils nationally. Leaders from another school have been booked to undertake an external review of Plumstead Manor's use of the pupil premium funding at the start of December. Leaders have produced a detailed written strategy to combat the potential underachievement of disadvantaged pupils.

You and your leaders are further developing the quality of 16 to 19 programmes of study in the sixth form. Staff training, better information, advice and guidance for students and the development of a distinctive culture in the sixth form are beginning to have an impact on student outcomes.

Since the previous inspection, the members of the governing body have made some deliberate changes to the way they work with school leaders. They have developed a comprehensive visiting programme that allows them to be both more visible around the school and more knowledgeable about the work of different departments. The headteacher provides accessible information on the school's performance and governors are now more willing to challenge this. However, they know that further support in interpreting new performance data would be beneficial and they have training plans in place.

Leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the actions needed to secure better outcomes for pupils. Their honest and strategic evaluation ensures that detailed plans for improvement have measurable outcomes. Leaders have a clear strategy to address the issues identified at the previous inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided consistently good challenge and support to school leaders. It works closely with school leaders to ensure that development plans, particularly around pupil premium pupils, adequately address the areas needing swift improvement. They have supported the headteacher in brokering external support from other schools and agencies. They believe that the headteacher has the capacity to make the necessary improvements. The local authority believes that this is 'an improving school'.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector