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14 October 2013

Mr James Shapland  
Headteacher  
Ashlyns School  
Chesham Road  
Berkhamsted  
HP4 3AH

Dear Mr Shapland

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ashlyns School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. 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 2013. 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. The school should take further action to:

- Ensure the school's records of the quality of teaching include the progress being made by different groups of students, in particular those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, those eligible for pupil premium funding and those who are higher attaining.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders. I reviewed your updated school action plan and self-evaluation summary. We also visited a number of lessons together to look at the quality of teaching and the marking of students' work.

## **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, you have replaced an assistant headteacher with a second deputy headteacher. As part of the reorganisation of the Berkhamsted school system, you have extended your provision from 1 September 2013 to incorporate Years 7 and 8, adding an additional 400 students to the number on roll.

## **Main findings**

Information you showed me on students' progress at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2013 demonstrates that the proportion of students making more than expected progress is increasing. You are also successfully tackling the variation in standards between different subject areas in Key Stage 4.

Your transition to secondary school status has been smooth and you have managed the acquisition of a number of new teachers from the two former Middle Schools well. The very few teachers who are not yet good, receive good quality support. The quality of marking has improved, and an increasing proportion of students now routinely respond to their teachers' marking.

You have given subject and year leaders more responsibility for assessing the quality of their teams. Observations of teaching are regular, but do not currently provide enough detail about the progress of different groups of students. Members of the governing body have challenged every senior leader about their personal impact on raising standards.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The local authority has brokered additional support from local schools including Watford Grammar School for Boys, Watford Grammar School for Girls and Dame Alice Owen's School. This support has particularly benefitted the modern languages department.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [ [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) ] – for academies