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27 May 2014

Scott Martin  
Headteacher  
Adeyfield School  
Longlands  
Hemel Hempstead  
HP2 4DE

Dear Mr Martin

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

Following my visit to your school on 23 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 December 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 that the school action plan indicates times of the year when progress against actions will be monitored, and how evidence to demonstrate progress will be gathered
- make sure that the new marking system achieves its main goal in showing students how to improve and demonstrate that they are making good progress
- decide which initiatives funded by Pupil Premium are having the greatest impact
- ensure leadership at subject leader level is consistently strong so that they can fulfil their role in driving improvement, and support the senior leaders fully
- collaborate with schools who have demonstrated effectiveness in improving poor attendance.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher, groups of students from Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan. Accompanied by you, I visited six lessons, to speak to students and look at their books. I also checked the school's record of recruitment checks on staff.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the Chair of the Governing Body has resigned and a replacement has been appointed.

## **Main findings**

The school improvement plan sets out your aims to become a good school within two years and incorporates the actions for improvement identified in the last inspection report. The plan is not yet sharp enough because it does not indicate when you will check on progress, and it does not identify all of the activities you plan to carry out. You have already taken action to move the school on, but when such activities have measurable outcomes, these should be clearly indicated on the plan so that those who are monitoring know whether you are on track to achieve your goals.

You are forecasting a slight rise in attainment for the proportion of students set to gain five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE in 2014. This group of students' prior attainment on entry to the school was significantly lower than last year's cohort. Consequently, this will represent improved progress, if achieved. While you can point to individual students who receive Pupil Premium funding who are forecast to achieve better, this group of students on the whole do not achieve as well as their peers and the gap between their attainment and others in the school is too wide. Students in the sixth form speak positively about their progress, and your internal assessment data forecast improved outcomes in 2014.

You are working well with identified teachers to tackle the barriers which are preventing them from being consistently good. These teachers have their lesson plans scrutinised more closely and are encouraged to work in collaboration with your better practitioners. Most teachers are responding positively to this support. The quality of leadership of subject leaders is inconsistent. Therefore, some are in a stronger position to offer guidance and support to their teams than others. However, you are aware of this and are taking appropriate action.

Your new marking system is being used by teachers regularly. However, it is not yet achieving its goal in making students aware of how they can improve and rectifying

their misconceptions. Not enough teachers are challenging students with carefully structured follow-up questions when marking books, which allow them to demonstrate they are making progress.

Improving attendance remains a challenge for the school. Actions taken to date have not raised students' attendance to above the national average. Most, but not all students, with whom I met recognised the negative impact of taking a holiday during term time.

Members of the governing body are developing a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school to focus on areas identified in the school action plan. In March, two members of the governing body reviewed the impact of the new marking policy. Their evaluation informed appropriate recommendations for further action. Governors acknowledge their crucial role in ensuring that Pupil Premium funding is deployed to maximise outcomes for those students who are eligible. They also acknowledge that this funding is not yet impacting fully on improving these students' outcomes.

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**

Senior leaders and members of the governing body appreciate the support provided by the local authority. The local authority has produced a detailed support plan with a specific focus on improving English, mathematics and science in the school. Hence, these teachers are developing their practice and the quality of their teaching is improving. The local authority has not ensured that the school's own action plan is sharply focused enough to ensure that procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school are sufficiently robust.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**