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9 September 2014

Mr Stephen Casey
Headteacher
Queen's Park High School
Queen's Park Road
Handbridge
Chester
CH4 7AE

Dear Mr Casey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Queen's Park High School, Cheshire West and Chester

Following my visit to your school on 8 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 May 2014. 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:

- modify the post inspection school improvement plan so that key milestones are established by which the impact of actions can be measured and checked against targets to ascertain on-going progress. Targets, performance indicators, milestones and the review and evaluation of actions are not sufficiently sharp and clear.
- ensure that the post inspection school improvement plan offers greater clarity with regard to the features of teaching and learning that need to be improved and actions required to bring about that improvement.
- promote ways to engage students more actively as participants in the development of a strong aspirational and improvement culture.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and two governors including the chair. I held a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement advisor. Documents summarising other actions taken since the section 5 inspection were also scrutinised. A learning walk of the school was undertaken with the headteacher.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school's context since the May 2014 section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher and other senior leaders have produced a post inspection improvement plan that tackles the key recommendations arising from the May inspection. I have outlined above two modifications to the plan which I believe will improve its focus and clarity.

The school has a sharper focus on the progress of students. The school's tracking and monitoring systems are now better focused on charting the progress made by students supported by the pupil premium and identifying where interventions are required to enable better student progress. Target grades for disadvantaged students have been reviewed and changed to reflect greater expectation and ambition. Staff training on strategies to engage and promote accelerated performance for disadvantaged students has been undertaken. Each department has developed subject specific action plans for engaging these students. Current student progress tracking data indicates that students supported by the pupil premium are doing better and that achievement gaps between them and their peers are narrowing. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is to be undertaken later this month.

Governors have strengthened their awareness and understanding of student monitoring and how evidence about performance is tracked. They are developing a better understanding of how well students are doing and what needs to be done to improve the progress that all students make.

External support

The local authority is committed to supporting the school in aiding its improvement planning and practice. I have suggested that work should be extended with best practice external partners so as to enhance the development and sustainability of an aspirational and improvement culture which challenges all students.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector