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Mr Carl Gliddon
Headteacher
Oldfields Hall Middle School
Stone Road
Uttoxeter
ST14 7PL

Dear Mr Gliddon

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oldfields Hall Middle School

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 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 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:

- accelerate the progress of the most-able and disadvantaged students in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Year 5 and 7
- ensure all teachers consistently apply the school's assessment and marking policy so that students understand how to improve their work
- ensure middle leaders routinely analyse the information they have about students' attendance, behaviour and progress in order to quickly implement appropriate intervention and support.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you and members of your leadership team to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection and the last monitoring inspection visit. Meetings were held with subject and year leaders including the heads of English and mathematics, members of the governing body, the Local Leader of Education, who is providing support for the school, and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school development plan. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information about students' progress and attainment. I visited classes in Year 6 to see the students at work in English and mathematics. I spoke to the students about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I considered the 48 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 12 responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, Parent View.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection visit in June 2014, a new headteacher has been appointed after the retirement of the previous post holder. Two teachers have left the school. Five teachers have joined the school working in a range of departments.

Main findings

The new headteacher has introduced a much needed sense of urgency and purpose to the work of the school. Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the initiatives he has introduced to improve students' outcomes. One member of staff spoke for many when they wrote, 'Mr Gliddon has had an extremely positive impact since he started in September'.

The school has prioritised improving the quality of teaching. Information provided by the school shows that since the last monitoring inspection, students experience better teaching across all subjects in all year groups. As a result, an increased number of students are making the progress expected of them. In Year 5, the majority of students are making expected progress in reading and the large majority are making the progress expected of them in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, 7 and 8, most of the students are making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, information provided by the school shows that the progress of the most-able students and those in receipt of the pupil premium (additional government funding to support students who are disadvantaged) is less secure, particularly in Year 5 and 7.

The headteacher has revised the assessment and marking policy. Work in students' books shows that the majority of teachers are implementing the policy and that this is helping students to improve their work. However, a few teachers are not consistently applying the policy. As a consequence, students in these groups are not clear about how to improve their work.

The checking of students' progress is frequent and thorough. As a result, the school has copious amounts of information about students' attendance, behaviour and

academic development. However, a minority of middle leaders do not routinely analyse the information they have to implement appropriate support and guidance for students not making the progress expected of them or whose behaviour and attendance falls below expectations.

Governors remain fully committed to the school and the students. They have accessed appropriate training to support them in their role, for example on how to interpret external data on students' achievement. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher provides accurate and succinct information which enables governors to provide appropriate challenge and support. Governors know how the school spends the pupil premium grant and the effectiveness of interventions to support disadvantaged students.

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 provides effective support for school leaders and governors. They have commissioned support for improving the quality of teaching. As a result, information provided by the school shows that the quality of teaching and students' progress have improved. The local leader of Education provides effective support in a range of areas, for example in improving the quality of teachers' planning to meet students' needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries

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