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Mrs Alex O'Donnell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs O'Donnell

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Cleeve Park School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body, and a trust representative the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons in English, geography, science, mathematics and design and technology. I met with a range of staff working in the school, including the literacy lead and the leader of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. I also spoke with pupils, observed breaktime, and reviewed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Cleeve Park School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

You were appointed as headteacher in January 2021, shortly before the last inspection. As part of your work to strengthen the senior leadership team, you have appointed a new leader with responsibility for teaching and learning and a new leader for raising standards in the sixth form.

At the time of the last inspection, it was noted that leaders had developed ambitious plans for all year groups. However, the implementation of these plans was inconsistent, and teaching did not routinely reflect the same level of ambition for pupils. This was impacting on behaviour, and some pupils were not engaged in lessons. Since the last inspection, you have taken decisive and considered action to drive change forward. This is supported by expertise from the trust. You have established a carefully planned and ambitious professional development programme for subject leaders to ensure consistency across subjects and year groups. You have developed a robust quality assurance programme and are monitoring progress across the school. Pupils are more engaged in lessons, and there has been a marked improvement in behaviour. Staff say these actions have led to a positive change in the culture of the school. They are enthusiastic about the support they receive and feel empowered to drive forward the necessary changes.

The last inspection highlighted variation in pupils' knowledge and skills in reading and writing. The reading strategy has evolved, and pupils enjoy regular opportunities for reading in lessons and as part of tutor time, with a strong focus on vocabulary. The targeted support programme for weaker readers is seeing considerable success, particularly for pupils impacted by COVID-19. As the strategy continues to evolve, leaders should give careful thought to how the interventions are timetabled so that no one subject is affected.

You, and your leaders, have ensured that the actions you have taken will have significant impact. You use data to inform your actions. They are not 'quick fixes' and have led to a positive change in professional culture across the school since the last inspection. You have carefully considered staff well-being and workload and are highly consultative in your approach, ensuring that your staff are fully on board and play an active role. You have ensured that parents and carers are kept informed and that there are opportunities for them to understand and support their child's learning.

There have been positive developments in the sixth form since the last inspection. The new leader has established a clear vision for the sixth form and is working towards a stable offer for pupils, which is ambitious for both vocational and academic subjects. Numbers in the sixth form are increasing, and students speak highly of their teachers. Students value the opportunities in place to take on roles of responsibility and develop wider skills. They would like to see more of a focus on diversity and inclusion to help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

You are working towards improving your programme for personal development. You have taken steps to ensure that there is a well-planned and sequenced curriculum for PSHE education, which reflects the needs of your pupils. You are aware that some further work is needed to ensure staff have sufficient training to teach this curriculum well and that learning is monitored and assessed. You have expanded the extra-curricular offer for pupils and are considering how to ensure that more pupils take up your offer, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

You found the support offered through the Department for Education Behaviour Hub to be highly effective, and this has helped to strengthen and deepen your work to improve behaviour. This collaboration has enabled you to have the confidence to continue to drive forward change in pupils' attitudes to learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive of TKAT multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Polly Haste
His Majesty's Inspector