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Martin Watson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Watson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Lavington School

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 12 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, three members of the Governing Body including the chair and vice-chair, and with a group of students. The school's action plans were evaluated. During the meetings with senior leaders, the school's analysis of data on students' achievement, records of monitoring of the quality of teaching and arrangements for the performance management of teachers were discussed. The inspector undertook a series of observations of lessons with the headteacher and with one of the school's deputy headteachers; during these observations the inspector talked to students and discussed their work with them.

Context

While there were a number of key staff changes at the beginning of this school year in September, there have no significant staff, or other, changes since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

- Detailed whole-school action plans cover all aspects of the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report and include clear targets for improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Thorough and rigorous monitoring procedures have been implemented.
- Governors are clear about what needs to improve and they are monitoring progress rigorously.
- The recently introduced year leader role has led to much improved monitoring of students' achievement across all of their subjects and to well-targeted interventions.
- While there is a good set of strategies for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, there is some variation in the quality of subject action plans and in the application of these monitoring procedures. Senior leaders are taking actions to improve this.
- Senior leaders and the governing body are absolutely clear about where teaching is not good enough. Senior leaders have put in place high-quality support for some teachers, with clear targets for improvement and plans for implementing capability procedures where necessary.
- Further training for teachers is focused well on the key aspects of teaching that need to be improved. Teachers able to model best practice for others have been identified, such as the two lead practitioners for literacy. This is already having an impact on improving teaching in some areas.
- The school has made good progress in developing students' skills in literacy through subject teaching. An agreed set of well-defined strategies is being embedded across all subject areas.
- Changes have been made to the curriculum for current Year 10 and 11 students, with plans for further developments in the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Three pathways meet well the needs of groups of students, as well as providing sufficient flexibility to meet individual needs.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- enable the Governing Body to monitor improvements in each subject area more closely
- involve students more in providing feedback to senior leaders on the quality of their learning.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Because the school converted to an academy in January 2011, it does not have any support from the local authority. However, it has maintained good formal and informal links with schools in the region and uses good and outstanding practice in those schools to support teachers and subject departments; this had led to improvements in, for example, the teaching of French. It has also retained the services of its former school improvement partner to provide helpful external support and monitoring. The school has the capacity to secure the improvements required and I recommend that the school does not need any additional external support at this stage.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely

James Sage

Her Majesty's Inspector