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14 December 2012

Devon Hanson
Principal
Evelyn Grace Academy
255 Shakespeare Road
Lambeth
London
SE24 0QN

Dear Mr Hanson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Evelyn Grace Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 13 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 and senior staff gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy 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 Principal and senior leaders. In addition, telephone discussions were held with the Chair of Governors and a representative of the academy sponsor. The academy's development plan was evaluated and documentation relating to the newly introduced teaching and learning policy and programme of support for teachers was discussed.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the recent inspection which judged the academy to require improvement.

Main findings

The Principal is tackling weaknesses in achievement through a robust focus on improving teaching and learning. Linked to this is an emphasis on raising students' aspirations and improving behaviour and attitudes to learning. The Principal has a strong presence around the academy and in the short time since his appointment he has established a positive relationship with students, making his expectations for behaviour clear. The academy's development plan has an appropriate priority to improve students' behaviour for learning with an emphasis on eliminating low level disruption. There is a particular focus on improving the behaviour of the current Year 9 cohort. The development plan does not, however, have suitably specific and measurable targets by which to judge the success of the strategies designed to achieve this.

Senior leaders have been fully involved in an audit of teaching and learning which has been used to identify teachers whose teaching was judged to require improvement. A programme of support for these teachers has been implemented. This involves support from mentors and coaching in the elements of effective teaching including, for example, using assessment data to plan lessons which better match the ability of different groups of students, and questioning pupils effectively to speed and deepen learning. Recent monitoring by senior leaders indicates improvement by most of the teachers who have undertaken the programme. The academy has published clear guidance on effective teaching for all staff in a new teaching and learning policy which is linked to professional development opportunities and the performance management cycle for teachers.

The Chair of Governors has a strong working relationship with the Principal and the governing body receive regular presentations on improvement strategies from senior leaders, most recently on the attainment and progress targets for Year 11 students.

Planning is at an advanced stage for the implementation of a programme for middle leaders during the spring term 2013 which will develop their role in improving outcomes for students in subjects and establishing clear lines of accountability. However, the role of middle leaders in promoting improved and measureable progress for students is not highlighted sufficiently within the evaluation criteria in the academy's development plan.

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

- enhance the academy's development plan so that it includes clear and measurable targets for the behaviour for learning of the Year 9 cohort of students

- ensure that the role of middle leaders in promoting improved progress and attainment is more explicitly highlighted within the academy's development plan.

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

External support

The ARK Foundation continues to provide effective support for the academy. This has been carefully tailored to meet specific needs following consultation with the Principal and senior leaders. Support has focused on a range of subjects including science, mathematics and music together with joint work with senior leaders in order to develop improvement planning. A strong focus of this support has been the planning and implementation of 'in house' improvement programmes using the expertise of academy staff. In addition, ARK Foundation support staff conduct regular monitoring of teaching and learning which provides valuable information for senior leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and to the Director of Education for the ARK Foundation.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner
Her Majesty's Inspector