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7 May 2013

James Stewart
Principal
Sawtry Community College
Fen Lane
Sawtry
Huntingdon
PE28 5TQ

Dear Mr Stewart

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Sawtry Community College

Following my visit to your school on 7 May 2013, 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and your senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, five subject leaders and a group of more able students from all year groups. I evaluated the school improvement plan and other documents, including revised data on the progress students are making. The vice principal and I made a tour of the school to look at the quality of marking in students' books.

Context

Since the last inspection two advanced skills teachers have been appointed; one in mathematics and one to lead the development of literacy across the academy.

Main findings

You have revised the school development plan to include the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan is easily accessible to leaders and governors. Those I met clearly understood the priorities. You should include greater detail of how the progress in achieving the aims will be monitored and the role of governors in the monitoring process.

In order to address the issue of slow progress in English, you have reorganised the leadership of the subject. The English department is also developing literacy across the curriculum. A working group has been set up to develop policies and how they will be implemented and a new leader has been appointed to take charge of the work. The school's monitoring shows that more students are now making the progress expected of them in English.

Discussion with a group of more able students indicated that teachers provide too few opportunities in lessons to stretch and challenge them in order to improve their progress. They also confirmed that the regularity and quality of teachers' marking is still variable, but they could tell that the academy's leaders were taking action to improve this aspect of teaching. Subject leaders look regularly at a random sample of students' work.

You are working to increase the proportion of good or better teaching by linking groups of teachers with complementary skills. Teachers are observing each other and sharing ideas and good practice.

Leaders of the sixth form have improved the systems for monitoring the progress that the students are making to enable them to focus mentoring accurately on each student's needs.

Governors have prepared well for the six new members who will soon join the governing body by organising training in advance of them taking up their posts. They are taking advantage of other training on offer and have completed an informal review of the effectiveness of their work.

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 school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- increase opportunities to challenge more able students in lessons
- sharpen improvement planning.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection, including a further monitoring visit in the next Autumn term.

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

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector