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21 May 2013

Ms Elizabeth Horrigan
Headteacher
Harlington Community School
Pinkwell Lane
Hayes
UB3 1PB

Dear Ms Horrigan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Harlington Community School

Following my visit to your school on 20 May, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 met with you, other senior and middle leaders and two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plans and related documentation. I carried out a tour of the school with you to see it at work.

Context

There have been five new appointments to the governing body since the last inspection and two resignations. The school has recruited new parent governors from the community.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors have responded very constructively to the findings of the last inspection. In response to the inspection recommendations senior leaders have changed target setting practice to ensure that it is very challenging for all students. Marking has been improved. A firm expectation has been established that students are given reflection time every fourth lesson to act on suggestions for improvement. Book scrutiny and student interviews have established that this is becoming increasingly effective in improving students' work. Weekly faculty development time is being used to increase lesson challenge for all students by reviewing the taught curriculum and sharing best teaching practice. Curriculum leaders have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their curriculum areas. The house structure which includes staff has been used to group subject leaders into learning partnerships. Subject leaders are now acting as critical friends to each other, which they find very beneficial.

Senior leaders and governors are very aware that they need to reduce the variation in subject outcomes for students. Senior leaders have been allocated teachers to mentor to help them improve their classroom practice. While there is still teaching that requires improvement in a few subject areas, the early impact of mentoring has begun to reduce its frequency.

The governing body has undergone local authority training and commissioned an external review of performance. A 'speed dating' session was arranged to improve induction for new governors and sharpen the link between governors and school leaders. This involved the pairing of new and experienced governors who quizzed senior and middle leaders, in rotation, about their roles, responsibilities and the challenges facing the school. As a result of a variety of training the governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have significantly increased their challenge to senior leaders.

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:

- eradicate remaining variation in subject outcomes for students.

As we agreed, I will review the outcomes of the 2013 summer examinations early in the autumn term 2013.

External support

The local authority has limited capacity for direct input but has been effective in brokering support for the school. Governor training has been delivered by a local authority representative and the local authority has brokered an external review of

governance. This is due to be completed in June and July 2013. Additionally, the local authority has booked some school-to-school support for mathematics and business studies. The school has formed strong links with good and outstanding schools in Hillingdon and Hounslow.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector