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18 June 2013

Mrs Sarah Young
Headteacher
Hessle High School and Sixth Form College
Tranby House
Hessle
Unknown
HU13 0JQ

Dear Mrs Young

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hessle High School and Sixth Form College, East Riding of Yorkshire

Following my visit with Philip Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 17 June 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you other senior leaders, representatives of the Governing Body, a group of teachers, middle leaders and a representative of the Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and monitoring records of lesson observations were scrutinised.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection there have been no significant changes to the school's context. The school is an academy supported through a local Trust arrangement.

Main findings

The headteacher has prioritised work to improve the quality of teaching. A strength of the new lesson planning template is that it is a 'live' document which teachers are encouraged to annotate as they reflect on the success of their lesson and plan the next steps for students' learning. Teachers and middle leaders are finding the new approach helpful as a strategy for self-evaluation. The headteacher has established links with other schools through local partnerships, and although these arrangements were in place prior to the section 5 inspection, they show the school recognises the importance of communication and collaboration with others. In discussion, other leaders did not demonstrate convincingly the level of critical thinking and incisive action necessary to move the school to good within 18 – 24 months.

The Trustees and governors have not acted with the same urgency. They have not robustly challenged senior leaders' over-generous view of the school's effectiveness immediately prior to the section 5 inspection, particularly around the quality of teaching, nor have they taken incisive action to set in train support for the wider leadership team to quickly increase their impact as leaders and managers of change.

The school improvement plan requires some revision to give a sharper focus on the sixth form and the Learning Support Centres, both aspects of provision identified as requiring improvement in the main body of the section 5 inspection report. The judgements following my visit are given below.

The headteacher is taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Governors and trustees are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection.

The school should take immediate action to:

- incorporate into the school improvement plan actions relating to the improvement of the sixth form and the Learning Support Centre
- use established links to provide leaders, in particular the deputy headteachers given their strategic role, with opportunities to observe first-hand good and outstanding leadership and management of teaching and learning.

We discussed and agreed that I would carry out a further visit and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has established links locally as a member of the East Riding Learning Partnership and as a member of the academy headteachers' group. The headteacher considers these links are beneficial in ensuring the school remains outward looking and cites examples of how these links have been used to support areas of the school's work. More could be made of these partnerships to develop the skills and knowledge of the wider school leadership, including the governors, to ensure that their work has greater impact on improving the quality of provision and outcomes so that the school is judged good at its next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Cathryn Kirby

Her Majesty's Inspector