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Roger Abo-Henriksen
Headteacher
Philip Morant School and College
Rembrandt Way
Colchester
CO3 4QS

Dear Mr Abo-Henriksen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Philip Morant School and College

Following my visit to your school on 1 July 2013, 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 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, the Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Governing Body and representatives of the local authority.

Context

Since the inspection you have announced your decision to retire at the end of this term. A deputy headteacher has been appointed as acting headteacher until a permanent headteacher is appointed. He is currently working alongside you and is taking the lead on the school's response to the Ofsted inspection.

Main findings

Following the inspection, you quickly formulated an action plan which is rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and systematically addresses each improvement point from the inspection report. It has clear success criteria and

realistic milestones. You review progress against the plan weekly and the Vice-Chair of the Governor Body has attended several of these meetings ensuring that governors are very well involved in monitoring the actions of senior leaders. In many instances, you have put in place good building blocks to address the areas for improvement but it is too soon to see their impact. However in two areas positive results are already evident. You have introduced new systems for monitoring and recording behaviour. This has led to a culture of tighter monitoring of and reduction of low level disruption and greater celebration of positive behaviour. Teachers have improved the quality of marking, leading to better understanding by students of how to improve their work. Evidence for the impact of both these areas is found from the two rounds of discussions with student focus groups conducted by the local authority since the inspection.

You have introduced new systems to enable leaders to assess the quality of teaching more accurately. Eight leaders have undertaken training in Ofsted inspection skills from an inspection service provider this year and this is helping to sharpen the school's view on the quality of teaching. However, inconsistency remains in middle leaders understanding of effective teaching. A coaching programme to improve teaching is underway and more time and resources are to be invested in this from September. You are exploring how to adapt the curriculum to reflect government policy while retaining options that will allow students of all abilities to succeed.

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, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- continue to strengthen subject leaders' ability to improve teaching and learning through monitoring teachers' work
- establish an agreed whole school set of principles for teaching that goes beyond behaviour management
- by the end of this term, ensure appropriate challenge and support is in place for the acting headteacher
- ensure that the school's own judgements regarding the quality of teaching reflect the impact of teaching over time rather than snapshots of lessons.

I will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will visit your school next term to check on the impact of your improvement plans.

External support

Although this is an academy, since the inspection the local authority has worked effectively with the school to monitor its actions and its improvement. The local authority has carried out paired observations to help improve the rigour of the school's assessments. Their review included observation of all teachers found to teach lessons that were either inadequate or required improvement. More training

PROTECT-INSPECTION



has been arranged for next term to deepen teachers' understanding of student progress information and aspirational targets, especially in the sixth form.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector