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Mr Andrew John
Headteacher
Sprowston Community High School
Cannerby Lane
Sprowston
Norwich
NR7 8NE

Dear Mr John

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sprowston Community High School

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 on 20 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your team of senior leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated. A brief visit to classrooms with senior leaders gave me the opportunity to observe students' learning.

Context

Since the last inspection two members of staff have been promoted to the senior leadership team and a third has been appointed to lead the sixth form. Two pastoral leaders have been appointed in Key Stage 3. Fifteen staff will leave the school at the end of this term.

Main findings

You and your staff have focused your efforts on ensuring that students are suitably prepared for examinations this summer. Less progress has been made in tackling the

areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Improvement plans have been updated to address the key issues raised in the inspection but they lack clarity because there are too many of them and they do not include specific, measurable targets to hold all staff to account for raising achievement.

Additional training for teachers, matched to their individual needs, is under way. An enhanced programme of regular lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and greater involvement of middle leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching and students' learning is ready for implementation in September 2013. Procedures to review the performance of subjects in each faculty have been piloted and will commence from the start of next term. These plans and procedures will not begin to secure improvements until well into the new academic year.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- reduce action planning into a single, coherent plan with specific, measurable targets to gauge the impact all staff have in securing improvements
- ensure that this plan is implemented as soon as possible and evaluate its effectiveness before the autumn half-term
- organise training for governors to improve their understanding of performance data and how to use it to support the school's work

Ofsted will carry out a further visit in the autumn term and where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Support provided by the local authority is valued by the headteacher. The school is benefitting from additional support from a consultant one day each week. The governing body has been restructured to sharpen its support and challenge for senior leaders. They are well-informed by regular updates from the headteacher but need further training in interpreting data to enable them to fully challenge senior and middle leaders about the school's performance.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector