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8 July 2013

Mr Scott Ratheram
Headteacher
Cottingham High School and Sixth Form College
Harland Way
Cottingham
HU16 5PX

Dear Mr Ratheram

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

Following my visit to your academy on 5 July 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 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 of Governors and two governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss support plans.

Context

Since the S5 a new headteacher has taken up role on 1 June. The acting headteacher at the time of the inspection has returned to his role as deputy headteacher.

Main findings

Senior staff and governors share your high expectations and determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the academy and to raise achievement for all groups of pupils, and especially those who are disadvantaged. For example, academy improvement plans place a great emphasis on improving the progress of pupils who are eligible for additional support through pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs. Data and information are now being analysed more sharply to identify where changes need to be made to systems and procedures throughout the academy. The higher expectations that staff have of all students is reflected in more challenging targets. Students in all year groups who are making slow progress have been identified, and programmes to support them are urgently being developed. Realignment of the work of some staff has started to provide additional support to key groups of students for example, to secure better attendance of students who are eligible for free school meals, and more regular checks on the achievement of students in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form have begun.

Revisions to the roles of senior staff and governors have quickly been implemented. Each are clear about their responsibilities for driving improvement and they have swiftly set about establishing a plan to guide their initial actions. Governors are keen to improve the quality of teaching for all pupils and to ensure that middle leaders are fully involved in checking that the programme, as it becomes firmly established, is having an impact on learning. Individual governors are working closely with senior leaders to ensure that a programme of support and training is tightly focussed on the standards they expect of all teachers. The central importance of teachers in accelerating and sustaining rapid changes in the quality of their teaching is demonstrated in governors' plans to regularly meet with staff.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The academy is starting to build a network of support, drawing on stronger practice in good and outstanding schools such as Driffield School and South Hunsley School. Senior leaders used their meetings with staff from both schools to inform the depth and detail of their improvement plans. Governors have commissioned a programme of external scrutiny and tailored support from the East Riding of Yorkshire local authority. This programme is due to begin later in the term. The school found the Ofsted seminar: 'getting to good' useful.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Prof John Greenman - Chair of the Governing Body
- East Yorkshire Local authority
- The lead inspector.