

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01216 799163
Direct email: lewis.mackie1@serco.com



8 July 2013

Brian Ward (Interim Principal)
Castle Donington Community College
Mount Pleasant
Castle Donington
Derby
DE74 2LN

Dear Mr Ward

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Castle Donington Community College

Following my visit to your school on 5 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, the assessment manager, and the Chair and one other representative of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I reviewed the school's tracking information, the new format for monitoring lessons, and reports from an external consultant.

Context

Uncertainty about the school's temporary senior leader role continued after the inspection. This was clarified in June. The interim principal has agreed to remain in post until January 2014 with the provision of additional leadership time next term. An assistant principal and one teacher will leave the school at the end of term. A new vice-principal will join the school next term. A principal has been appointed to commence in January 2014.

Main findings

Uncertainty in the school's senior leadership has been a barrier to the school's progress. The interim principal has had limited capacity to drive improvement because he has continued with responsibilities associated with his previous role. The school improvement plan identifies the priorities from the inspection. It is not clear what difference the actions identified will have on pupils' attainment and progress because success criteria are not measurable with milestones to check on progress over time.

Governors do not receive information on the quality of teaching and pupil progress to enable them to fulfil their duties. Input to the improvement plan is limited. Arrangements for an external review of governance, recommended at the time of the inspection are underway, in addition to training on performance management. The governing body has been successful in recruiting a new principal.

A few steps have been taken to support improvement. Teachers have worked together to agree a format for lesson planning. A format has been agreed for lesson observation with a sharper focus feedback, pace and challenge. Links developed between the school and feeder primary schools are beginning to help pupils to sustain their progress in mathematics at transition. In English, steps have been taken to improve accuracy in the assessment of writing.

Since the inspection leaders and governors have identified additional gaps in the school's procedures and monitoring arrangement. This has also contributed to the slow progress to date. The target setting and tracking systems do not focus enough on the progress expected from Key Stage 1. Not enough is being done to tackle the dip in performance when pupils join the school in Year 6. Training is planned to develop teachers' expertise on assessment data, and how to judge progress.

Improving the quality of teaching does not feature as a leadership responsibility. Leaders do not have an accurate view of teaching because monitoring is not systematic. Account is not taken of pupils' progress or other sources of evidence such as book scrutiny when reaching judgements on teaching. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and priorities involving senior and middle leaders and governors are weak.

Clarity in the school's leadership has been welcomed. There is openness between the interim principal and the governing body about the shortcoming identified. They are ambitious for the school and determined that with increase capacity and expertise at senior leadership, progress will be accelerated.

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:

- include measurable success criteria in the improvement plan, with milestones, so that progress can be effectively monitored and evaluated
- establish a baseline for the quality of teaching across the school through a review of lesson observation, lesson planning, pupil progress, book scrutiny and feedback from pupils to inform and support training and performance management
- establish a leadership role to drive improvement in the quality of teaching
- use attainment at Key Stage 1 to set challenging targets for pupils in Year 6 and Year 9
- make greater use of National Curriculum transition matrices in English and mathematics for cohorts, classes and groups of pupils to track and evaluate progress
- explore with primary feeder schools the feasibility of shared schemes of work for English and mathematics supported by moderation arrangements to maximise the progress of pupils on transfer
- use the external review of governance to identify the information and reports required to monitor progress linked to improvement plan priorities.

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

External support

The school has made good use of an external consultant to explore inspection findings with the interim principal, assessment manager and middle leaders. This has been helpful in identifying action points to support improvement. The governing body has valued consultant input during the recruitment process for the new principal. The Chair of the Governing Body is setting up an external review of governance.

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

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic
Her Majesty's Inspector