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Kate Greig
Headteacher
King Ethelbert School Academy
Canterbury Road
Birchington
CT7 9BL

Dear Ms Greig

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit to King Ethelbert School

Following my visit to your school on 18 September, 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the Executive Headteacher, other senior leaders, including the Chair and Deputy Chair of Governors, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. With two deputy headteachers, I made a tour of the school and dropped into lessons where I observed learning and talked to pupils about their work. I evaluated a range of documentation including analyses of the recent GCSE results.

Main findings

You and your senior leaders are rightly proud of the improving attainment of students at your school. This summer's GCSE results confirm that the achievement of young people is drawing much closer to national averages. You have led the school on a positive journey and have made further refinements to your systems and processes since the last inspection such that you are well placed to secure further improvement.

With your senior leadership team you have developed a strong tracking system which checks on pupils' progress and enables all teachers to know whether their pupils are doing as well as they should. This enables you to support and challenge both the teachers and the pupils if and when slippages arise. Various different packages are available to pupils who need specific support. You have been careful to ensure that these packages are short term, clearly focussed on learning goals and that their effectiveness is measured. You have also rightly ensured that those pupils eligible for free school meals are well supported, for example, by offering a summer school for Year 6 new entrants to help them and their parents make the transition to your academy.

All teachers now have access to data about the progress which pupils make that is properly moderated. There is a clear understanding across the academy that teachers are accountable for the progress and attainment of those that they teach. Both your senior leadership team and governors scrutinise pupils' performance in order to identify individuals and groups of pupils for whom adjustments need to be made. We agreed that you need to check that all teachers are using this data to help them make sure that every lesson is carefully tailored to the individual needs of different pupils in their class.

The school has worked hard to develop the range and quality of teaching. Teachers are challenged, supported and their progress reviewed routinely both by leaders and on a peer to peer basis. Some teachers have left. You are now confident that all your teachers are reflective practitioners and teaching is improving well. You have developed an academy-wide understanding of what constitutes good marking and feedback to pupils. Some of the pupils' books that I looked at reflected very high standards of feedback so your work in this respect is evidently taking root. Similarly, I saw the positive effect of your initiative to help all teachers feel confident in teaching literacy skills and introduce a weekly literacy focus. You agreed that further work to help teachers support their pupils' numeracy development would be appropriate.

Governors have an insightful view of the strengths of the academy and the areas that need attention that is well-founded on data. While they have not commissioned an external review, they have carried out an exhaustive internal self-review since the

inspection. They are very clear how they properly hold the academy to account. They have contributed to the most recent improvement plan ensuring that all the Ofsted recommendations are properly incorporated and that tracking systems are in place to facilitate regular monitoring the academy's progress towards its goals.

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 academy forms part of a federation with Dane Court School, whose Headteacher is also the Executive Headteacher of the academy. This partnership is well established and has benefited both schools. The two schools are now in the process of sponsoring two local primary schools in order to become a multi-academy trust which they anticipate will further benefit pupils through a strong management structure. Academy leaders have a clear understanding of what their school needs and feel that they are able to commission appropriate help from outside sources including Kent County Council. Their partnership work with the local teaching school has provided welcome opportunities for teachers to engage in opportunities to share their own good practice and learn from others. Senior leaders have sought to foster strong relationships with their two main feeder primaries in order to support pupils as they move into the academy at the end of Year 6 and recognise that they can build further on this work to good effect.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing
Senior HMI