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30 September 2013

Jonathan Osborn  
The King Edmund School  
Vaughan Close  
Rochford  
SS4 1TL

Dear Mr Osborn

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The King Edmund School**

Following my visit to your academy on 27 September 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 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 on 30 April and 1 May 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. The academy should take further action to:

- further extend the range of activities used to gather evidence on the quality of teaching, including that gained from learning walks, so that leaders have a very detailed understanding of the typicality of teaching over time for all groups of students.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, students, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement was evaluated. You and I made a tour of the academy and visited a range of lessons.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, which judged the academy to require improvement, some new appointments have been made. These include a new head of science, a new head of chemistry and a new Key Stage 4 coordinator for English.

## **Main findings**

Accurate self-evaluation before the inspection enabled leaders to identify accurately what needed to improve; no time has been lost in tackling weaknesses. Leaders have taken decisive action to address issues in science, with new appointments and responsibilities allocated in line with teachers' specialist knowledge. Where teaching was judged inadequate, swift action has been taken and systems to enhance performance management and accountability are promoting a culture where there are no excuses for weak performance.

The action plan has been revised and every half term, meetings are programmed for senior leaders and governors to review the progress towards that term's targets. In addition to addressing the weaknesses outlined at the last inspection, the plan usefully keeps the strengths in mind so that these can be extended. Each development area has a governor allocated to check and support progress. The plan has a clear focus on improving outcomes for students, but needs to refer more to the progress being made in Key Stage 3, as progress in this stage was a weakness at the last inspection.

All teachers are giving students a clear indication of what all of them must be able to do by the end of the lesson, with additional aims to challenge the more able students to go further. Students recognise and clearly understand the system and describe it as giving them 'a clear motive to achieve your best'.

A useful addition to the academy website allows homework to be stored so those who are absent or unsure what to do can check and extend their learning by visiting one of the useful websites linked to the work. Teachers give helpful comments instead of grades and students feel this makes sure they read and respond to the advice. They also recognise that teachers are giving additional attention to helping them develop good literacy skills.

Governors understand the academy's strengths and weaknesses well. They carry out their duties to monitor and assure the quality of the academy's work diligently and effectively.

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 local authority is supporting and challenging the school well. Communication is regular and support has been provided in a number of ways. A National Leader of Education has been working with the headteacher, who has, in turn visited an outstanding school. The local authority commissioned a review of inclusion and the academy is acting on its findings. Through a local partnership, the support is enhanced for students experiencing difficulties that impede regular attendance and good behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**