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10 October 2013

Mr Martin Brown
Principal
Cleethorpes Academy
Grainsby Avenue
Cleethorpes
North East Lincolnshire
DN35 9NX

Dear Mr Brown

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cleethorpes Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 9 October 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 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- ensure all targets identified in the improvement plan are smart and include measurable points throughout the year so that progress can be checked regularly
- embed thoroughly all training started this year, in particular for the curriculum leaders, to make sure that there is a more consistent approach to their monitoring and to the academy's drive to improve the quality of teaching.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and two other members of the governing body. I also met with two officers and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from the Tollbar Family of Academies, who are the sponsors. Various documents were evaluated including the most recent improvement documents, teachers' review files, arrangements for performance management and the 2013 GCSE results.

Context

Since the previous inspection, four members of staff have left the academy, most have been replaced. An appointment has been made to replace a member of the senior leadership team who left to join another academy within the Tollbar group.

Main findings

The urgency with which improvements must happen is not lost on you or the colleagues who I met during my visit. Since the previous inspection, new systems have been put in place to ensure consistency within the academy. This is especially important for curriculum leaders so that they know how and when to monitor aspects of the performance of teachers within their departments. Knowing why curriculum leaders are judging planning, assessment or the overall quality of a lesson, for example as good, ensures a more consistent approach by leaders. Systems have been formalised and consequently leaders are better able to check regularly if things have improved at a later date, following training for example. Linking this work clearly to performance management ensures all teachers take responsibility for making improvements. The academy's improvement plan is a comprehensive document linked closely to the four areas judged during inspection and with particular reference to the main areas for improvement. It needs to be strengthened so that progress towards intermediate milestones, which currently are missing from the document, can be checked regularly.

Classrooms display literacy posters and information from these is being used more often by both teachers and students. You recognise that the priority has been literacy, reading in particular and that numeracy needs to receive a similar focus.

Governors have a good understanding of the challenges facing the academy. They work in partnership with you and the sponsors to ensure improvements happen rapidly and are sustained.

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

External support

Strong support and challenge is provided by the School Improvement Officer from the Tollbar Family of Academies. Staff work closely with others so that practice can be shared. Training is mainly 'in house' for all staff, but more bespoke training is planned. As yet, it is too soon to measure the impact of this work and its effect on individuals' practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the CEO Tollbar Family of Academies.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector