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1 November 2013

Matthew Parrot
Principal
Shepshed High School
Forest Street
Shepshed
LE12 9DA

Dear Mr Parrot

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shepshed High School

Following my visit to your school on 31 October 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 September 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 school should take further action to:

- review target-setting approaches to check that students are on course make expected or better progress
- make full use of external partnerships to develop the monitoring and quality assurance skills of middle leaders
- refine the marking and feedback policy, so that a consistent whole school approach is adopted before the end of the year
- amend the current action plan to include significant milestones, so that progress can be clearly measured.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Vice-Principal, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the

action taken since the last inspection. I met with subject leaders of the English and mathematics departments. During this meeting we carried out a work scrutiny. The school action plan was evaluated. We visited classes and spoke with some students during lessons about their learning.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staffing since the school's inspection.

Main findings

The Principal, new to post since September, and other leaders have already started to address some of the most urgent areas for improvement identified at the time of the school's last inspection. Action plans rightly focus on improving outcomes for students, especially at Key Stage 2 as well as improving the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Training and development opportunities have taken place to develop literacy across the curriculum; during the learning walk, evidence of a wide range of extended writing opportunities was seen. The quality of marking and feedback has greatly improved since the last inspection; teachers are giving detailed constructive comments and explaining the next steps for students, although this is not consistent across the school yet.

Leaders have taken on board suggestions from me about how they might improve target-setting in the school, as well as the frequency and accuracy of data collections. Middle leaders have devised plans to ensure that they are improving outcomes for students and developing greater consistency in teaching across their departments. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken an active part in reviewing the improvement plans. A review of governance is planned for November. The Principal is diligent and strong; his outward-looking approach in finding support for the school, such as a partnership with a teaching school alliance in a neighbouring authority is intended to develop leadership capacity in the school. Leaders have already attended Ofsted's 'Getting to Good' seminar.

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's plans to support the school have not been urgent enough. It has, however, agreed to firm up links and partnerships for the school within two to three weeks. The Principal, in the meantime, has sourced for himself, the services of a school improvement partner. Governors make good use of the local 'Learning Partnership', which offers opportunities to share good practice with other governing bodies.

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

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly
Her Majesty's Inspector