

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T: 0121 679 9168  
Direct email: [beverley.joyner@serco.com](mailto:beverley.joyner@serco.com)



4 November 2013

Colin Dean  
Principal  
The Robert Smyth Academy  
Burnmill Road  
Market Harborough  
LE16 7JG

Dear Mr Dean

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Robert Smyth Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 1 November 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:

- include precise measures of success in the improvement plan so that leaders and governors can judge whether pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are improving fast enough
- set clear expectations for subject leaders, so that they carry out their monitoring and quality assurance role more consistently and effectively
- develop existing partnerships to improve leadership at all levels.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, including the Vice-Principal in charge of teaching and the Chair of Governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with subject leaders in the mathematics and English departments, during which we looked at examples of student

workbooks. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We also carried out a learning walk with the Vice Principal and spoke with some students about their learning and progress.

## **Context**

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

## **Main findings**

Leaders have begun to take action to address the key areas for improvement as set out in the inspection report. The academy improvement plan rightly focuses on these areas, although the measures of success are not sharp enough, which means that monitoring and quality assurance activities cannot be carried out effectively. Training and development have taken place for staff to help improve literacy across the curriculum and teachers' questioning skills. The successful impact of this was seen during the learning walk. Teachers have improved the quality of marking and feedback and this is now a much more consistent picture across the academy. Senior leaders effectively monitor the quality of teaching but middle leaders, whilst diligent, do not perform their monitoring role rigorously or frequently enough. The Chair of Governors has a clear view of what is necessary to improve the role of governance; he has devised a clear plan of action, which is intended to help governors to challenge and support the academy better. An external review of governance is planned before the end of year. The Principal and other senior leaders are ambitious and capable. They have been active in seeking external support intended to further 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 Principal makes use of a school improvement partner to help him validate judgments about the quality of teaching. Recent links made with a teaching school alliance has allowed leaders to learn from best practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**