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Paul Davies
Headteacher
Kettering Science Academy
Deeble Road
Kettering
NN15 7AA

Dear Mr Davies

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kettering Science Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 8 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 academy should take further action to:

- amend the academy development plan so that it lists actions, milestones and staff involved more clearly
- ensure the amended plan is distributed to all staff and subsequently discussed, so that everyone understands their role in improving the academy.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, teachers, and a representative of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the academy sponsor. I evaluated the academy improvement plan and a range of documentation. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to a range of classes.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the academy was inspected in September 2013, though at least nine teachers will leave at the end of December.

Main findings

You have responded to the findings of your recent inspection with vigour. Your colleagues have reacted in the same positive manner and there is an enthusiasm to make the academy the best it can be.

A wide variety of effective action is taking place. The quality of teaching is improving due to a rigorous system of performance management. Support plans are now in place for teachers who are underperforming and subsequent improvements have already been seen. Teachers are more accountable as their performance targets now include the progress made by all of their students. This progress is tracked very effectively by the leaders in charge of data. The information on student performance is increasingly accurate because teachers consider and discuss students' work more often.

More time is given over to developing writing skills in the primary phase. As a result, pupils are improving their ability to write at length and for different purposes. In the secondary phase, teachers of all subjects have benefited from training on the academy's new literacy strategy; lesson plans are being amended to increase opportunities for writing in every subject area. Numeracy skills are now being developed in real-life contexts. Students' individual needs are now met more successfully, in both the primary and secondary phases. Timetabled hours have been scheduled for teachers to share best practice.

Behaviour policies are better applied and there are more strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour. As a result, the number of exclusions has reduced. Attendance is improving due to very close monitoring of students and better communication with parents. Improvements are still required in this area, particularly regarding persistent absentees.

Governors now challenge academy leaders more successfully. They have, at their request, been provided with more comprehensive data to inform their decisions. Governors have benefited from training on pupil performance data.

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 sponsor has given effective support, including assisting with the appointment of key staff in both the primary and secondary phases. These

individuals are helping to improve the quality of the teaching in the academy by modelling good practice for their colleagues. The academy sponsor has also helped to establish effective professional development for teachers, including subject leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire, the Education Funding Agency and the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector