

## PROTECT-INSPECTION

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Mark Guest  
Headteacher  
Sir William Robertson Academy, Welbourn  
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Welbourn  
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Dear Mr Guest

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sir William Robertson Academy, Welbourn**

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 June 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:

- ensure that judgements on teaching quality are underpinned by students' progress over time across all key stages, and evidence from work scrutiny
- strengthen the quality and consistency of subject leaders by requiring them to ensure good quality teaching and good rates of progress across all classes
- provide the governing body with regular performance reports that capture attainment and progress across subjects, cohorts, and groups of students, linked to national expectations
- strengthen the improvement plan by:
  - including measurable success criteria and milestones so that progress can be evaluated over time

- identifying who will evaluate and report on progress to the governing body, and when
- identifying more precisely how the impact of leadership and management will be measured at all levels.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and three representatives to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A telephone discussion was held with the school's improvement partner prior to the visit. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was scrutinised including governing body minutes, and records of staff training and quality assurance activities. A 'learning walk' was conducted with the headteacher, including brief visits to lessons.

## **Context**

Since the inspection six teachers have left the academy; seven teachers joined in September. A deputy headteacher and lead practitioner for English have been recruited to commence in January 2014. Two new governors have been appointed to the governing body. The school roll has reduced by thirty-nine students since the inspection. The sixth form which opened in September 2012 includes seventy two students across Years 12 and 13.

## **Main findings**

The academy did not make the improvement expected in GCSE performance in 2013 because attainment and progress declined in English, particularly for the boys. These results were a surprise to the academy and reflect a lack of rigour in the processes used to check the quality of the academy's work. Academy leaders and the governing body have been galvanised by these results and acted swiftly to identify weak practice and to enlist external support to secure rapid progress. Input from external examiners and opportunities to work with a specialist English teacher from a Training school have supported a sharper focus on course requirements. The tracking system has been centralised to check on students' progress. Students who are performing below expectation are now quickly identified for intervention.

As a response to inspection findings the tracking of progress in the sixth form has improved. This has been complemented by regular academic tutoring and a broader range of enrichment activities. Joint lesson observation with colleagues from an established sixth form is helping to build capacity and greater confidence in the sixth form. Greater emphasis on students' progress in Key Stage 3 is providing a coherent strategy for improving achievement.

The academy has strengthened the monitoring of teaching; this has included a shorter notice period for teachers and the use of 'learning walks' to focus on key

priorities, such as literacy. Programmes of support are in place to improve teaching at all levels. Leaders recognise that the next step is to check that judgements from lesson observation are reflected in students' work and progress over time. Links with two Training schools are used effectively to target support at specific subjects and teachers. A high priority is placed on training; this is increasingly personalised, and linked to lesson observation outcomes. Training for subject leaders has commenced with a focus on leading teaching and learning and the use of data. Further work is required for all subject leaders to demonstrate good or better leadership.

As a result of an external review and additional training governors are clear about their responsibilities. This has given them the confidence to be involved in 'learning walks' to observe the learning experiences provided for students. Governors have identified areas of underperformance and invited subject leaders to explain results, and their plans for improvement. Governors are less clear about the attainment and progress of all cohorts and groups.

The improvement plan is sharply focused on inspection priorities with tasks and actions to provide direction. The success criteria are not linked to each task with milestones that allow progress to be rigorously checked and evaluated. The success criteria for raising achievement in English does not have enough emphasis on the proportions of students to meet or exceed national expectations from different starting points for cohorts and groups of students.

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**

External links have been carefully chosen to match the academy's specific development needs. Leaders have commissioned support from two Training schools to support developments in English, science and the sixth form. This is closely focused on improving the quality of teaching and leadership. Aspirant leaders have been identified to access training to strengthen capacity. A number of appropriate programmes are planned including a review of English and 'moving teaching from good to outstanding'. The Governing Body has appointed a school improvement partner to provide an external perspective on the work of the academy.

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

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**