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18 November 2013

Ms Andrea Barnes
Headteacher
Wetherby High School
Hallfield Lane
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS22 6JS

Dear Ms Barnes

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Wetherby High School

Following my visit to your school on 19 November 2013 with Helen Storey Senior HMI, 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 us 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan and various monitoring and evaluation documents were also scrutinised. The main focus of the monitoring visit was the progress of low and middle attaining students. We observed a number of lessons, scrutinised students' work and held a meeting with a group of students.

Context

A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2013.

Main findings

You, senior leaders and the governing body have accepted the inspection judgements and have introduced a number of strategies to bring about improvements. However, given the time since the last section 5 inspection, these have not had sufficient impact on improving the progress and attainment of all students to ensure the school is securely on track to be judged 'good' at its next inspection. Your school improvement plan has been revised to focus on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection alongside your other priorities. However, it does not focus sharply enough on the improving the progress and attainment of specific groups of students who are not achieving as well as they should. The school's latest data show that middle attaining students achieve less well in English and lower attaining students achieve less well in mathematics. One reason these students make slower progress in lessons is because work is not matched carefully enough to their needs. As a result, not all students remain engaged and interested in their learning and low level disruption occurs. Some students who spoke with inspectors were dissatisfied with this situation; they did not feel that all teachers were meeting their needs or that they are making the progress they would like.

Student target-setting and tracking is not clearly understood by all students. For some students the marks and comments they receive from their teachers on their work do not match the overall assessments that the school makes of how well they are doing. While subject leaders are using students' targets and data about their progress to plan interventions the overall picture of a student's progress is not sufficiently clear to all teachers or to the student.

Strategies have been introduced to improve the quality of teaching and the school's own records show that the number of good and outstanding lessons is increasing. Most teaching observed during this monitoring inspection required improvement because it did not meet the specific needs of the students so learning and progress were not good.

- ensure lesson observations focus specifically on checking whether teaching is enabling students of all abilities to achieve well.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is receiving support from the local authority. The local authority led review in May 2013 gave a realistic assessment of the school's position. The school has not formed a strong partnership with a good or outstanding local school that is helping to accelerate improvement but Specialist Leaders of Education have undertaken work in English, mathematics and science.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector