

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

Direct T: 01216 799162
Direct email: siobhan.garrattley@serco.com



13 January 2014

Mr Russell Kennedy
Headteacher
The Lancaster School
Knighton Lane East
LE2 6FU

Dear Mr Kennedy

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Lancaster School

Following my visit to your school on 10 January 2014, 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 October 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 in the school improvement plan achievement targets for the proportion of pupils who will make better than expected progress, including for those supported by the pupil premium funding
- make sure that all teachers' marking indicates to pupils the timescales by which they have to respond to teachers' guidance about how to improve work.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, subject leaders for English, mathematics and science, and with three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with two representatives of the local authority. We visited some classes to look at the learning that was taking place.

I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information about pupils' progress, a sample of pupils' work and the school action plan.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

Main findings

You, other senior leaders and governors are determined to make the necessary improvements so that the school is judged to be good at its next inspection. There is no complacency and staff fully support the actions being taken to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers' expectations about how much more all pupils can achieve are now raised. This is because leaders are providing teachers with information in all subjects which highlight pupils' previous attainment and specifies clearly what they are capable of achieving. You have provided training on how work should be pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities. Teachers are increasingly using the training and information they have about pupils' potential to make teaching better. You are making sure that actions being taken to improve teaching and learning are making a difference through regular checks. For example, pupils' work is scrutinised by senior leaders every two weeks to see how well raised expectations about teachers' marking are being carried out. In the best practice, teachers are setting a time deadline for pupils to respond to advice, but such practice is not evident across all subjects.

The tracking of pupils' progress is robust so that it focuses sharply on pupils' progress, including those supported by the pupil premium funding. The person taking a lead for the achievement of these pupils is providing subject leaders with useful information to enable teachers to address these pupils' learning needs more effectively. A discrete section in the school improvement plan identifies how the achievement of these pupils will be raised. However, the plan does not fully specify what proportion of these pupils will make and exceed the progress expected of them from their different starting points. Similarly, the success criteria in the school improvement plan are less clear about the proportion of pupils who are capable of making better than expected progress. Otherwise, actions in the improvement plan are clear and suitable. They address the areas requiring improvement pinpointed by the most recent inspection. Lines of accountability are clear, as are the dates and timelines for carrying out and reviewing the impact of actions.

You have revised the system for managing performance by including objectives for staff that are linked to the improvements identified at the last inspection. This is a significant strategy which is steering the drive to improve pupils' achievement. Governors I met are fully behind the changes you and other leaders have introduced. Governors are skilled at asking searching questions of school leaders and individual governors plan to attend training to help them sharpen up their understanding about pupils' achievement.

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 is providing proportionate support to the school. It has brokered support for helping improvements in marking by linking the school with another one which has a track record for effective practice in this regard. There is a link with another school where there is success in the achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding. The identification of effective practice there is being used at Lancaster school to make further improvements. There is a plan for the headteacher from a nearby outstanding school to support, but the details of this are yet to be worked out.

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

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector