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16 January 2014

Mr Clive Sentance
Headteacher
King's Norton Boys' School
Northfield Road
B30 1DY

Dear Mr Sentance

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to King's Norton Boys' School

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 November 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:

- establish links with a good or better school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, middle managers, the Governing Body and the local authority link representative to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Several lessons were visited, students work scrutinised, and an analysis of student progress data carried out.

Main findings

The inspection in November correctly identified improvements in teaching that were already underway. These are effectively driven by your systematic approach to

tackling long-standing mediocrity. A key factor has been your elimination of weaker teaching, through targeted support for teachers and a school-wide professional development programme. As a result, faculty leaders, many of whom are recent appointments, can point to clear evidence of improvements in teaching.

The inspection brought attention to the need for planning lessons that address the learning needs of all students, and for teachers to improve written feedback to students. Both elements are occurring in all the lessons seen at this visit, indicating a welcome and consistent whole-school response. It will take some time before these approaches impact on student progress, but current data points to higher standards now, in comparison with the same period last year. Developmental feedback to students on what they should do to improve is clear in most examples seen. Not all students are consistently responding to it. Some lesson plans use a basic model that assumes more able pupils do easier work before attempting more challenging activities, and take little account of the previous lesson's end point.

Governors were disappointed at the grades awarded in the recent inspection, given, as they saw it, improving attainment and attendance over time in the main school and sixth form. Meeting notes convey succinct summaries of discussion. The steering committee meeting I attended rigorously questioned the progress the school is making against the Ofsted action plan. The committee forensically probed evidence from external and internal performance datasets, including information on teaching quality. The school action plan addresses the points for improvement well, and would be further enhanced by clearer student outcome milestones.

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 has appointed a link representative to support the school. The head teacher has met with local colleagues to exchange information about effective approaches to raising attainment. There is on-going leadership training for governors already in place. Links with good or better schools are planned so that staff at Kings Norton Boys can visit good practice in other settings. At this early stage there is limited evidence of impact from external support, although the governing body meeting was effective in challenging school leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form