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24 January 2014

Mrs Helen Renard
Headteacher
Sir Robert Pattinson Academy
Moor Lane
North Hykeham
Lincoln
LN6 9AF

Dear Mrs Renard

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sir Robert Pattinson Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 23 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 academy should take further action to:

- sharpen up the improvement plan to ensure that impact measures relate closely to students' progress outcomes
- strengthen local partnership working, so that teachers can learn from best practice more systematically.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, subject leaders, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan and your self-evaluation report were evaluated. Departmental plans and latest assessment information were also scrutinised. I carried out a tour of the school with you, visiting different classes

across the key stages. I spoke with some students about their learning and examined their workbooks.

Context

During the autumn term 2013, there have been a number of staffing changes which includes the appointment of three new teaching and learning leaders, called 'Impact Postholders'. Since the inspection in November, the deputy headteacher has supported leadership in science and taught in the department, while the subject leader has been absent. An English teacher was appointed in January and advertisements for lead practitioners in science and English have been placed.

Main findings

You have put together a sound plan of action to address the key areas for improvement identified in the section 5 report. Improvements in teaching have been prioritised correctly and there are appropriate activities to help drive this forward. The plan does not specify the success criteria in terms of students' progress outcomes clearly enough; this will make it difficult to evaluate your plans effectively. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and honest.

New leaders have brought added rigour to monitoring activities carried out by subject leaders, as well as support for teacher development. Core subject leaders speak confidently and accurately about the strengths and weaknesses within their departments; they have developed appropriate plans to drive improvement. Comprehensive continuous professional development opportunities for staff have already led to improved practice.

New teaching and learning post-holders have developed greater consistency across the academy; for example, in the way that teachers use assessment data to inform their planning and marking to help students improve their work. However, student intervention plans are not as focused as they could be.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have a sound grasp of the key issues facing the academy; they have received valuable input from a commissioned consultant. The Chair of the Governing Body is currently undertaking a course on leadership and governance run by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, bringing valuable expertise to governance. Since the restructure of the governing body in September, governors have improved the way that they hold leaders to account; for example, they have made focused visits to the academy and met with students to check the implementation of the strategic plan.

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

You have made important links with outstanding schools; two in the local area and one in another county. These have been effective in the short term, but the academy does not have a long term strategic plan to develop partnership working. The support that the academy has received so far has provided valuable development opportunities for you and some of your leaders. Some teachers have also made good progress as a result of improving teaching programmes provided by a local Teaching School Alliance. The academy has bought the services of an educational consultant, who has brought an important level of challenge to academy leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly
Her Majesty's Inspector