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Mr B Lawrance
Headteacher
Frederick Gough School - A Specialist Language College
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Dear Mr Lawrance

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Frederick Gough School - A Specialist Language College, North Lincolnshire

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 2014, 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 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:

- Produce a clearer strategic statement about the use of the pupil premium so that governors are better placed to hold senior leaders to account for its impact
- Improve the rigour of the way lessons are observed and feedback is given so that there is a stronger focus on the impact of teaching on learning and progress

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, curriculum leaders for English and modern foreign languages, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last

inspection. The school improvement plan, evidence of recent monitoring and a number of other documents were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection there has been very little change in staffing. One teacher has left the school and no new teachers have taken up posts. There has been one appointment to the support team. Work to develop new school buildings continues to take up a good deal of time of senior leaders and governors.

Main findings

Your senior team has produced comprehensive plans to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection and appropriate actions are underway to move the school forward. You have conducted a thorough review of the quality of teaching across the school and you have provided feedback to each teacher. Greater detail in recording the impact of teaching on learning and progress is required, so that feedback to teachers can be more focused and specific. Nevertheless, you have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and have provided training for the whole staff on relevant issues. Members of staff are responding very positively to the range of opportunities to improve their teaching. The training and coaching provided has helped to increase awareness across the staff of the learning needs of boys and those students eligible for the pupil premium. Teachers are now provided with more useful data on students' progress and this is helping them to plan and deliver lessons which better meet the needs of all students.

Recent results of early entry examinations in English and mathematics confirm strategies to raise the achievement of boys are working. Approaches such as single-sex classes and circle-time are helping to close gaps in achievement between boys and girls. You now check the progress and attendance of students eligible for the pupil premium more systematically. However, the impact of pupil premium funding is not monitored sufficiently closely to enable governors to know which strategies are working well and which are not.

The attendance of all students is checked every week and efforts to improve attendance are now more co-ordinated. Overall attendance for this academic year is better than 2012-13. The attendance of students eligible for the pupil premium is still not good enough and more needs to be done to motivate these students to attend regularly. You are considering how to use individual targets to further motivate students to improve their attendance.

A new information management system has been installed and is helping to ensure progress and attainment data is used effectively to support lesson planning. Middle leaders are responding well to being given greater responsibility. They are increasingly involved in checking the quality of teaching and holding teachers to

account for the progress students make. The performance of staff is now managed more tightly. Teachers are clear about what is expected of them and are responding positively to greater scrutiny.

Governors have a good understanding of the challenges facing the school. The information you provide for them is now more comprehensive and they are better placed to ask searching questions. They recognise there are gaps in their understanding of performance data and have arranged suitable training to help them in this area. Governors do not, however, have a sufficiently strategic approach to the use of pupil premium funding and are not clear on how effectively it is being spent.

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 allocated additional time from the School Improvement Partner and an Adviser is working with senior leaders for one day a week this term. The quality of this support has been good. The School Improvement Partner will also be a member of the team that has been established to review the school's progress at regular intervals.

In addition the school is working with a range of other schools to learn more about strategies to improve attendance and assessment.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector