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13 February 2014

Reverend Alan Perry  
Headteacher  
St Edward's Church of England School & Sixth Form College  
London Road  
Romford  
RM7 9NX

Dear Reverend Perry

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Edward's Church of England School & Sixth Form College**

Following my visit to your academy on 13 February 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy 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:

- ensure that new systems for monitoring student progress are shared with all teachers to allow them to identify any underperformance and rapidly bring about improvement
- ensure that assessment information is shared with governors in a way that allows them to ask challenging questions about student progress.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The academy action plans were evaluated. I looked at your assessment documentation and carried out a scrutiny of students' books. I also joined you on a short tour of the school.

## **Context**

Since the inspection, some middle leaders have returned from maternity leave and resumed their duties. You have reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team. An additional post to monitor students' academic progress across the academy has been created.

## **Main findings**

The academy action plan demonstrates that leaders have a broad appreciation of the priorities. However, some of the improvements identified within the inspection report are not included in the plans. Timescales are too broad and you are not always measuring how improvements are leading to better student achievement. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to check that improvements are happening quickly enough or evaluate how effective actions have been.

Leaders say they are clearer about their roles and responsibilities and feel empowered to make a contribution to raising standards. New systems for recording, tracking and monitoring student achievement are now in place. These allow middle leaders to track how much progress students are making from individual starting points. Students entitled to the pupil premium funding and those with particular needs are monitored more closely. Further interventions can then be made to ensure they make better progress. You are aware that these systems are new and will require time to become fully effective. Training for all staff in using assessment information is on-going. However, you consider that teachers are increasingly planning lessons with appropriate levels of support and activities pitched at the correct level. The new data systems allow you to hold teachers to account for raising standards across subjects and year groups. Your current tracking information suggests that standards are rising. For example, in English, you believe more students are likely to achieve their target grades by the end of the year.

A new marking policy has been implemented and teachers are using it to provide detailed feedback to students. As a result, I saw that the quality of marking in students' books had improved considerably since the inspection. Students are given time to respond to the advice they have been given and therefore make better progress.

Governors have reviewed their own skills and have participated in training to strengthen their ability to analyse assessment information. They are now considering what type of information they need from school leaders to allow them to ask more demanding questions. They have aligned their own action plan with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. This is helping them to provide increasingly high levels of challenge and support to ensure that improvements are happening quickly.

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 arranged additional leadership and management support using a school improvement officer provided by the local authority. You consider that her advice has helped you to make improvements. Leaders and governors have worked with her to review the action plan and moderate teaching and learning judgements. The local authority is also providing you with governor training. You have strengthened links with local outstanding schools to help you recognise how to improve further. For example, you have reviewed how you measure the impact of the pupil premium funding, having seen good practice demonstrated elsewhere.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Havering, the Education Funding Agency, the Diocese of Chelmsford and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department of Education.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox

**Her Majesty's Inspector**