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14 May 2014

Mr Ian Morrel
Headteacher
Titus Salt School
Higher Coach Road
Baildon
Shipley
West Yorkshire
BD17 5RH

Dear Mr Morrel

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Titus Salt School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 13 May 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 February 2014. 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:

- once the review of governance has been received, decide without delay what actions need to be taken, carry out a governors' skills' audit, and ensure that governors receive promptly any consequential training.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, a group of staff including some middle leaders and members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A conference call was held with the Operational Director of the Bradford Partnership. The school's post Ofsted action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was also reviewed, including action

and impact assessment reports by senior leaders, governing body minutes, latest performance data, middle leader audits and action plans, quality assurance procedures, and the marking and literacy and oracy strategies. A tour of the school, which included visits to a number of lessons, was also undertaken.

Context

Since the inspection there has been a change in the leadership of special education needs. The governing body is at full capacity.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors have responded promptly to the outcomes of the inspection. They are clear about what needs to be achieved for the school to be judged at least good at its next inspection. Although staff and governors were disappointed by the outcome of the last inspection, they have put this behind them and are focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of leadership and management and governance. Senior leaders have high expectations of themselves and of all staff and have moved swiftly to implement a series of initiatives which are already having an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The revised Marking Strategy policy, including 'Making Marking Matter', has established clear expectations for all teaching staff in the way that they give feedback to students and require students in return to reflect and respond. There is a concerted emphasis on improving students' literacy and oracy and an awareness across the school that good literacy is essential for students to be able to access the curriculum. The revised approach to the use of seating plans by teachers and the 'Ease of Planning' form for lesson planning have focussed staff more directly on ensuring that all students make as much progress as possible in their learning. Seating plans now include pertinent data for each student. Teaching staff report that all these initiatives are helping them to be more focused in their planning and their teaching.

Senior leaders have created a post Ofsted action plan which includes all the areas for improvement identified by the inspection team. It identifies appropriate actions, time scales, who is responsible, success criteria, milestones, monitoring procedures and resource implications. This plan is yet to be ratified by governors. Discussions were held about ensuring that there are specific and discreet monitoring and evaluation procedures. Senior leaders are aware of the importance of using the best practice from within the school, as well as from other schools, to improve the quality of teaching, further develop skills of leaders and managers and improve the impact of their work on students' achievement. The enhanced work of the 'Teaching and Learning Champions' is helping to achieve this by providing bespoke support, mentoring and coaching for all staff. Senior leaders are clear that it is the impact of actions which is important. To this end the actions and impact assessments by senior leaders provide a helpful monitoring check on progress in tackling the areas for improvement. They reveal that the actions taken since the inspection are helping the school to make the necessary improvements.

Governors are well informed by senior leaders and are developing a clearer understanding of what needs to be achieved to ensure the school is judged at least good at its next inspection. They have already organised a review of governance in relation to the school's use of the pupil premium as recommended at the last inspection. At the time of this monitoring visit, the report had not yet been received by the school even though the date for publication had passed. In the meantime, governors have updated their knowledge of the school's use of the pupil premium and revised their approach to overseeing this aspect of their work with a new monitoring process by the chairs of the curriculum, pastoral and resources committees. Although they are knowledgeable, governors recognise that that they need to be better informed if they are to challenge school leaders on all aspects of school improvement with equal effectiveness. As a result, they acknowledge that they will need additional training. Bearing in mind that the full governing body has not undertaken a skills' audit for at least two years, it is timely for them to review their training needs and to have the outcomes of such a process appropriately planned and resourced.

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

Senior leaders welcome the challenge and support provided by the Bradford Partnership and the assistance and advice it can access through its membership of the Northern Lights Teaching Schools Alliance. They have already accessed school to school support. As a result of visits made to several neighbouring schools, they have started to implement changes to the school's assessment procedures. The school has also enlisted the services of an educational consultant to support training in relation to improving the accuracy and consistency of judgements about the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This training will take place later this term.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Maddison

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] – for academies