

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



11 September 2014

Mr Jason Carey
Headteacher
The James Hornsby School
Leinster Road
Laindon
SS15 5NX

Dear Mr Carey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The James Hornsby School

Following my visit to your academy on 10 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 May 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 academy should take further action to:

- clarify the targets and timescales within the improvement plan, so that those who are monitoring developments can check how far actions are leading to better outcomes for students
- take every opportunity to further reinforce students' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
- ensure that recently-appointed teachers and leaders in mathematics and science accelerate the rate at which students make progress.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and teachers, a group of students and a member of the governing body to discuss the actions taken

since the last inspection. I made brief visits to a number of lessons and looked at the way teachers give students feedback about their work. I evaluated the academy's improvement plans and documents relating to the outcomes of monitoring activities and the impact of performance management.

Context

Since the inspection, new appointments have been made to the teaching staff, and there have been changes to subject and senior leadership. A number of teachers have left the academy. The roles and responsibilities of those who provide additional support to students with special educational needs have been changed.

Main findings

With the support of the Executive Headteacher and other senior colleagues, you have taken robust action to improve standards in key subject areas. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the extent of student progress; difficult decisions have been made where standards have remained too low. The academy's improvement plans are comprehensive, and explicit about the actions that are needed, and who is responsible for each. It is less clear who will monitor the impact of actions, and how, and how often they will do so. Very recent changes to the roles and responsibilities of those who support students with special educational needs have enabled these colleagues to work more closely with teachers, plan appropriate support, and establish its impact. Changes to the English curriculum, a forensic focus on the requirements of the final examinations, and careful monitoring of student progress helped secure a marked increase in the proportion of students who achieved at least a grade C in the subject at GCSE this summer.

Recently-appointed subject leaders, including in science and mathematics, have high expectations and are implementing appropriate plans for improvement but too many students are working below age-related expectations because of a legacy of poor teaching. Recent changes have strengthened the capacity of senior leaders to provide support and challenge to subject leaders as they check standards and work to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers receive support that is helping them to make progress towards the demanding targets that they are set. Judgements on the quality of teaching are now more accurate because they are based on students' progress and performance over time, as well as on the observation of lessons. The incidence of low-level disruption has declined as the quality of teaching has improved.

Leaders and teachers are using accurate information on students' starting points and progress to set more challenging targets. Students understand these, and what they need to do to make progress towards them. This is monitored carefully by College leaders who help plan additional support for those who need it. Some teachers do not help students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills well enough.

Governors are continuing to hold academy leaders to account, and offer support and challenge. Regular governor visits help them to check the reports on all aspects of the academy's work that are given by senior leaders.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Local authority representatives have helped to provide effective training so that leaders can make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching, assessment and feedback.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Howard
Her Majesty's Inspector