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Ian Smith-Childs  
The Coleshill School  
Coventry Road  
Coleshill  
Birmingham  
B46 3EX

Dear Mr Smith-Childs

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Coleshill School**

Following my visit to your academy on 23 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 June 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:

- ensure that areas for improvement within the post Ofsted action plan are clearly matched to specific actions so that progress against these can be monitored effectively.
- clarify the way in which monitoring and review are presented in improvement planning so that it is clear who is responsible for each stage.
- ensure that the role of the governing body in reviewing progress is made absolutely clear

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the head of school, other senior leaders, students, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the sponsor to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy action

plan was evaluated. A number of short visits were made to lessons, students' work was considered and additional documentation taken into account.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the headteacher has left and you are now in post as head of school. A new assistant headteacher has been recruited with expertise in mathematics. A number of teaching staff have left the academy and five new teaching staff have been recruited mostly at middle leader level.

## **Main findings**

You are taking effective action to move the academy forward. You, your leaders, members of the governing body and the executive headteacher have a strong shared vision of what needs to be done in order to ensure that all students at this academy have a high quality education with good teaching at the core of that provision. You and other stakeholders, including the teaching staff of the academy, have responded very positively to the judgement made at the last inspection. You are very clear that the academy must continue its journey to reach at least good as rapidly as possible through building on the much more rapid improvement secured since June.

Documentation shows the actions that will be taken and there are clear milestones and success criteria for these, showing a realistic but challenging timeframe for improvement. However, these actions need to be more sharply focused so that the link between actions and specific areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are clear and progress can be tracked easily. Although governors are taking an active role in monitoring and reviewing the academy's progress, this is not yet clearly identified in the planning documentation.

You have rightly continued to focus on improving the quality of teaching in the academy. The introduction of learning intentions with different levels of difficulty is beginning to have an impact on raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve and students are responding to this positively with some evidence that they are willing to push themselves to achieve more as a result, where the focus is on the most challenging level. However, as yet, few teachers are currently offering activities with different levels of challenge and so are missing an opportunity to support the less able in accelerating their progress and to provide greater challenge for the most able.

Some teachers are skilled at using questioning effectively so that students are challenged to think carefully about their responses and the evidence they might cite to support these. However, as yet, there is little evidence that this good practice is being shared as effectively as possible.

There has been a real focus on improving marking and assessment across the academy, with a requirement that all teachers should offer advice about what has been done well and a target for improvement. The vast majority of teachers are applying the marking policy consistently. However there remains considerable variability in the quality of written comments made. Consequently not all marking helps students to understand how to improve their work. Whilst there was some evidence seen that some students are routinely expected to respond to teachers' comments, particularly in English, this was not uniformly the case, so that on occasion the same mistake was seen in a student's book several times.

The drive to improve students' pride in their work through a common insistence on high quality presentation, although variable across the academy, is beginning to have a positive impact. Students spoken to were very clear that expectations had been raised and that teachers would 'pick them up' if their work was scruffy. Students also said that they felt as if they were being 'pushed' much more to achieve as well as they could. They spoke of increased demands for homework and action taken if this wasn't completed as well as having to work harder in lessons because teachers were focused on their progress. All students spoken to were of the opinion that behaviour was improving around the academy because of the increased consistency with which teachers dealt with any infringements, but also because teaching has improved and they enjoy their learning more.

You have had a clear focus on improving the accuracy and frequency with which the academy monitors the progress of students. The move from predicted grades to 'working at' grades has allowed a much greater degree of accuracy and the increased frequency of data collection, particularly at KS4, is now allowing leaders to identify underperformance very rapidly so that early intervention is in place for those students who need it. However, this has yet to have a significant impact on closing the gap between those students supported by additional government funding and other students in the academy. Nonetheless, teachers are now better held to account for the outcomes of their students through the regular meetings with their curriculum leaders who, in turn, are accountable to Directors of Learning. This process is supporting the rapid intervention described above. However, we agreed, that next steps are to ensure that quality first teaching in all subjects and all year groups is secured so that intervention becomes a more targeted tool rather than an expectation at KS4.

Governors are supporting and challenging the academy well. They review their own effectiveness regularly, are very aware of when and where they need further expertise and are then proactive in ensuring that they build this either through recruitment or training.

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**

The academy is effectively supported by their sponsor who has a very clear and astute understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and the actions required to redress the latter. The sponsor is currently providing up to four days a week support and challenge through the Chief executive and up to two days per week from a National Leader of Education, which has had a measurable impact in improving standards. Equally, the sponsor is aware of the need to build more independent capacity within the academy and has clear plans in place to enable this.

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

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**