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24 September 2014

Ms Kate Smith
Headteacher
Linslade Academy Trust
Mentmore Road
Linslade
Leighton Buzzard
LU7 2PA

Dear Ms Smith

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Linslade Academy Trust

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 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 ensure that:

- feedback always makes clear how pupils can improve their work, and that teachers check they make the necessary changes
- all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, receive any additional help they need quickly, and that leaders check the impact of it carefully
- leaders, including governors, monitor the use, and impact, of pupil premium funding, and make this information known to parents.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and held discussions with members 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 pupils 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 previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher has joined the academy, and there have been changes to the teaching staff.

Main findings

You have established high expectations based, in large part, around a series of 'non-negotiables' that teachers must adhere to when they plan and deliver activities within the classroom. These include ensuring that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed within all subjects. Subject leaders have changed courses so that pupils can complete pieces of extended writing more regularly, and apply their mathematical knowledge when they complete work within different subject areas. Teachers assess pupils' progress in English and mathematics regularly, and usually make clear how pupils can improve their work. Your monitoring indicates that guidance to pupils sometimes lacks precision, and that not all pupils make the changes suggested by their teachers. Leaders have not audited the quality of the texts that pupils use in different subjects.

Leaders are changing courses to reflect the requirements of the new national curriculum, and to ensure that the more-able find the tasks that they complete more demanding. New monitoring systems identify those pupils who are falling behind quickly; some teachers are not using this information to plan activities to help all to catch up. You have put plans in place to ensure teachers and learning assistants work effectively together to best support the learning of those pupils who have special educational needs.

Subject leaders are involved in monitoring the quality of work in their respective areas; they support, and, where necessary, challenge their colleagues effectively when further improvement is needed. You are meeting with them regularly to check the impact of this work. Pastoral leaders are starting to work more closely with subject leaders to ensure pupils' progress is monitored regularly, that those who fall behind receive additional help, and that the impact of this is checked carefully. These changes are too recent for their impact to be fully evident.

Changes to the structure and membership of the governing body have increased the extent of governors' awareness of the quality of teaching and the extent of pupil

progress. Governor links with subject leaders have been strengthened, and focused visits take place. Additional training has helped governors gain a better understanding of data about pupil performance. An external review of the academy's use of pupil premium funding has taken place, but governors have not yet received the report.

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

You are receiving helpful support from the headteacher of a local school, and leaders are working with another school to check the accuracy of teachers' assessment. Training provided by the local authority, and by other providers, for subject leaders, teachers and governors has been effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Howard
Her Majesty's Inspector