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22 September 2014

Mr Trevor Langston
Headteacher
Kings Grove School
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CW2 7NQ

Dear Mr Langston

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kings Grove School, Cheshire East

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure the local authority undertakes a thorough review of how attendance is recorded and the robustness of arrangements for checking the welfare of those students who are educated off-site or at home
- raise standards of teaching and achievement for the least able students, particularly in English and mathematics
- review the school's self-evaluation so that it is incisive and accurate.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A series of short visits to lessons, work scrutiny and scrutiny of attendance registers took place.

Main findings

Senior leaders predicted progress in English and mathematics to be securely above national averages in this summer's GCSE examinations. This was not achieved. Progress in English and mathematics fell well short of the school's predictions and the national averages. Target-setting is inconsistent; sometimes it is not ambitious enough and sometimes too ambitious and unrealistic.

The least able students made the least progress in English and mathematics. Only a small minority made the progress they were capable of. Current progress of the least able students in English is weak. This is due to poor quality teaching, planning and marking.

Self-evaluation is over-generous and does not explain why predicted progress in English and mathematics was not achieved. While school priorities for improvement have been identified, teaching of the least able students is not one of them.

Performance management is not used rigorously enough, particularly to hold the most senior leaders to account. Despite this summer's poor results there has been no careful evaluation of the links between staff performance and students' outcomes.

Attendance codes are used incorrectly. There are insufficient checks on students who are educated off-site or those educated at home which constitutes a potential safeguarding risk. Some absence is incorrectly authorised.

This visit has raised serious concerns about the school's work. I will report these to the Senior HMI for the region who will consider what action to take and may arrange an inspection of the whole school.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector