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Mark Guest
Headteacher
Sir William Robertson Academy, Welbourn
Main Road
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Dear Mr Guest

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sir William Robertson Academy, Welbourn

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 second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2013. 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 section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, and with the heads of department for English, mathematics, and science. I toured the school, visiting most classrooms and holding discussions with students. I reviewed the minutes of meetings of the governing body. The revised school improvement plan was evaluated.

Main findings

You have improved the accuracy and depth of your self-evaluation by using a broader range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching. Lesson observations, which are now carried out with much shorter notice, are being supplemented by more-frequent, shorter focussed visits to classrooms and scrutiny of the students'

work. You are also making better use of data about the students' progress to reach your judgements. There is now a better link between the evidence you collect through monitoring, the performance management of the staff, and provision for the staff's professional development.

Heads of department are focussed more clearly on improving the quality of teaching in their subject areas. They have improved their skills to do so, with help from your network of partner schools, which has resulted in them making more-secure judgements. You have arranged for much more dialogue and working together amongst the heads of department, which is helping them to become more active and instrumental in bringing about improvements in teaching. I saw evidence of some of the improvements they have made, when I visited classrooms.

The governing body is now more involved in collecting evidence for itself about the work of the academy. It is starting to request more reports on the achievement of the students and is more questioning of the information it receives. There is not yet, however, a coordinated, regular, or standardised system of reporting such information to governors, covering all different subjects and student groups, with the frequency necessary to assist them in bringing about rapid improvement at the academy.

You have made improvements to the school improvement plan since the last monitoring visit. It is clearer, being more succinct than previously, and now includes useful, clearly expressed and measurable success criteria and milestones, which should prove useful in evaluating the progress made by the school. It is, however, still too vague in terms of the timings of actions and monitoring and evaluation activities.

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

You have made very effective use of a range of appropriate sources of external support, including networks of other schools and partnership within a teaching alliance. The support has been particularly useful in supporting improvements in the effectiveness of leadership and management.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire, the Education Funding Agency, and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector