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Anne Hayes
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hayes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wood End Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 24 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 plans clearly identify how and when improvements will be reported to governors, enabling them to evaluate the impact of actions regularly and accurately.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, the curriculum leader and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy plan was evaluated. Other documents scrutinised include information about pupils' achievement in 2014 and the pupil premium action plan. Together, we made short visits to classrooms and briefly observed teaching in Years 5 and 6. We looked at some pupils' work.

Context

You returned to school following an extended period of absence in September 2014. Three teachers left the school to work abroad in July 2014 and a fourth is now absent on maternity leave. You have found it difficult to recruit teachers to these positions, but have covered vacancies through the use of experienced agency staff.

Main findings

Following the last inspection you drew up clearly focused plans to address the areas of concern highlighted in the report. The plans identify who is responsible for leading each of the actions taken, and who will check that each of the actions has taken place. They do not, however, identify who will evaluate the impact of the actions or how this evaluation will be undertaken.

You have adapted your improvement plans to address additional issues that arise. For example, you identified that in 2014 disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers, particularly in reading and mathematics. You have given responsibility for oversight of this group of pupils to a leader who has created a detailed action plan to address these gaps in attainment.

Middle leaders are increasingly involved in activities which monitor the quality of teaching across the academy. They take part in scrutiny of books and observations in lessons. A calendar has been set up outlining which monitoring activities will take place on a week-by-week basis, and who will complete these. The calendar ensures that activities are well spread and do not overburden staff.

Structured input at weekly staff meetings also focuses on improving the quality of teaching. In particular, specific sessions aimed at addressing areas for improvement from the inspection report are planned. For example, the term started with a review of the academy's policies for handwriting, presentation and marking of work. This has ensured a consistent approach in these areas. The impact of this training is already evident in books as we saw teachers in all classes using identical structures for marking and feedback to pupils. Likewise, pupils are now demonstrating more pride in their work.

All pupils now practice their handwriting on a daily basis and you have introduced 'pen licences' for those pupils ready to move on from writing in pencil. These are awarded by you and pupils are proud to be the holder of a licence.

Since the inspection you have put in place training for teaching assistants to further develop their skills when supporting pupils in the classroom. Notes are kept in 'link

books' by teachers and additional adults working with a class to ensure that all adults working with any pupil have the most up-to-date information.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They are aware of the strengths of the school, and areas that need to be addressed. They are proactive in identifying ways to improve their own practice and are growing in confidence when holding leaders to account. They recognise that the support they are receiving from the local authority is central to their ongoing development.

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 make extensive use of the support services offered by the local authority. They have provided significant support, particularly in terms of improvement in governance, and monitoring of school effectiveness. In both cases, the link officers provide considerable challenge to leaders and governors. This support will remain invaluable as the academy seeks to improve rapidly.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Ealing and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector