

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus
Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9154
Direct email: aidan.dunne@serco.com

23 October 2014

Rob Garrett
Headteacher
Harwich and Dovercourt High School
Hall Lane
Dovercourt
Harwich
CO12 3TG

Dear Mr Garrett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Harwich and Dovercourt High School

Following my visit to your school on 22 October 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 first monitoring inspection since the school 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. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that new staff joining the school, particularly in science, receive the support and guidance they need to settle quickly and make a significant contribution to raising achievement.
- enable all senior leaders to understand fully their roles and responsibilities in raising achievement in subjects where students underachieve, and for improving the sixth form.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and one of your deputy headteachers, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan and review of its performance data were evaluated. Walking the school with you enabled me to see students at work in lessons.

Context

Since the last inspection, you have taken up your post as headteacher. Nineteen teachers have left the school and new appointments made to fill their posts. The school is fully staffed.

Main findings

You have settled quickly into your new role and implemented a wide range of changes to raise achievement. Your regular monitoring of teaching and analysis of the school's performance data have informed your plans for improvement. These plans focus on tackling the issues raised in the recent inspection, in particular improving the quality of teaching across the school.

Results achieved in 2014 were broadly similar to the previous years. You and your governors acknowledge that these outcomes show that not enough is being done to ensure that all students achieve what they are capable of attaining. Improving this remains a key priority for the school if it is to be judged good at its next inspection. Aspirational targets have been set to improve GCSE and A Level results in 2015, to increase the proportion of more able students attaining A* and A grades, and to accelerate the overall progress made by students in a wide range of subjects.

Your regular lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and analysis of assessment data is giving you a broader understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Training for all staff has taken place, focusing on making teachers' marking and feedback more consistent, improving their use of questioning and providing enough challenging work for more-able students. You have implemented procedures for checking the quality of lesson planning and gauging how effectively teachers use assessment data to monitor students' progress. These initiatives are new and not firmly embedded.

Several new appointments in science are either newly-qualified, inexperienced or trainee teachers. These staff will require intensive support and guidance to help them to settle quickly, and contribute to improving results in 2015. You have a large team of senior leaders. More needs to be done to ensure that all of them understand fully their roles and responsibilities in raising achievement in subjects that are under-performing, including science, and for improving the sixth form. The school's

performance data shows that not all of your subject leaders are checking that teaching in their departments is consistently good, or that progress data is being used effectively to tackle underachievement.

Governors show a good understanding of the improvements needed. They acknowledge that all leaders and managers, teachers and teaching assistants need to contribute effectively to securing the necessary improvements. A governor has been appointed to oversee each of the priorities within the action plan and to monitor the rate of improvements made.

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

The school draws on support from other partner schools in the North East Essex Educational Partnership (NEEEP) and from its good links with the local authority. Local authority advisers have brokered additional support from proven leaders in other local schools to provide the school with additional capacity to improve prior to your recent appointment. Further support is being arranged to support the school in making improvements to the sixth form.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter has been copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) as the school has a sixth form
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit