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Ced de la Croix
Sheredes School
Cock Lane
Hoddesdon
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Dear Mr de la Croix

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Sheredes School

Following my visit to your school on 12 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in October 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders; the Chair of the Governing Body and the governor chairing the teaching and learning committee; a representative of the local authority and a group of students.

The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. The school's self-evaluation documents, and minutes of line management meetings and governing body meetings, were also scrutinised.

Context

A new subject leader for science has joined the school since the last inspection and a new interim subject leader for modern foreign languages is now in place.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders have adapted their action plan to ensure it covers the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan sets out clearly what will be done and is reviewed to see if actions are on track. However, baselines against which to measure progress have not been specified in the plan. This hinders senior leaders' ability to measure the smaller steps towards improvement. For example, the current attainment of students eligible for free school meals is not stated nor the target for this group.

Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on developing teaching and learning in order to improve achievement. This includes fortnightly professional development sessions for staff, training for the whole staff and coaching by experienced teachers.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a range of systems to ensure that they have good information about the work of the school. This includes focused learning walks, such as on literacy across the curriculum. It also includes a consistent agenda for meetings between line managers and middle leaders, where aspects such as students' achievement and curriculum coverage are discussed. This helps to ensure that everyone is focused on the same things and communicates senior leaders' priorities.

Evaluation of the school's work is honest and self-critical. It provides senior leaders with a good foundation for commissioning the right support to address weaknesses.

External expertise, both through the local authority advisers and that made available through the Alban Teaching School Alliance, is supporting improvements in teaching through advisers planning jointly with teachers, team teaching and undertaking lesson observations. Similar support is provided to new subject leaders in order to ensure they gain expertise in holding teachers in their department to account.

Senior leaders have quite rightly focused on making sure that teachers are accurate in assessing the learning of their students. Many subjects, including English, mathematics and science, have had external moderation of teachers' marking, with the school acting on the feedback provided. Given that raising standards is a key issue, senior leaders have put in place two trial exams to check the progress of Year 11 students. Subject leaders are undertaking detailed analysis of what students have understood and where further teaching is required. However, departmental plans do not identify these curriculum issues or how they are being addressed. This information will help senior leaders to ensure subject leaders are provided with the right support and held to account for improvement.

Governors are well informed and minutes of their meetings reveal increasing challenge to the school. They have established a pupil premium strategy group to scrutinise how resources are being used and to ensure that the achievement of

students supported by pupil premium funding is given high priority. Governors are working with a local school with recognised expertise in this area to develop their practice.

Senior leaders have developed their own bespoke graphs to record the progress of students in each subject. These are an accessible way for everyone, including governors, to see who is on target and who is not.

The sixth form students are benefiting from refurbished facilities which are supporting the school's emphasis on directed study time during the school day. The sixth form leader is in the process of planning a new curriculum to support students for adult life.

The local authority has provided a range of support from its own advisers, and it has also brokered support from other schools. Senior and middle leaders are positive about this. The local authority statement of action specifies the support that is being provided and by whom. The plan is aligned to the school's action plan but it does not state when actions will take place and does not set baselines from which progress can be measured.

The pupil premium review has not yet taken place.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire, the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi
Her Majesty's Inspector