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Mrs Ella Brett
Headteacher
Ruskin Sports College - A Community High School
Ruskin Road
Crewe
Cheshire
CW2 7JT

Dear Mrs Brett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ruskin Sports College - A Community High School, Cheshire East

Following my visit to your school on 10 March 2015, 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 July 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 recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you as headteacher, other senior leaders, students, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority (LA) to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I considered documentation relating to students achievement, and the records of monitoring of the typical quality of teaching and learning. We also looked together at a sample of students' written work. You accompanied me on a brief tour of the school to check on pupil's behaviour and attitudes to learning. I also checked the single central record and found that it meets requirements.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit one new science teacher has been appointed, as well as a teaching assistant and two non-teaching staff.

Main findings

Since my last visit, you, senior leaders and governors have worked very hard and successfully to establish an outward-looking culture of high expectations of yourselves, other staff and students that is accepted across the school. You are sharply focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for students, who come from an increasingly wide range of backgrounds. You have challenged staff to embrace more innovative and effective ways of working. An example of this is your provision for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The impact of this work is evident in the significantly improved outcomes for this group of students and you are sharing this practice more widely within the LA.

The large majority of pupils and different groups currently in the school are making and in some cases exceeding expected progress more quickly than in the summer 2014 tests and GCSE examinations. You recognise that more work needs to be done to ensure that the most able girls, and students who are disabled or have special educational needs, achieve as well as they can, especially in mathematics.

Middle leaders are making an increasingly effective contribution to the school's improvement and high-quality training from a consultant has helped to build their confidence in holding colleagues to account. You are ensuring that leaders in charge of subjects are now well able to spread their own good practice across the school.

Your own monitoring records of teaching and learning clearly exemplify how previously underperforming staff have improved their practice and are raising the achievement of most students. This is partly because you and the governors have not shied away from difficult decisions about staffing in the event of any underperformance. Marking is now consistently informative about how pupils can improve their work. In the small number of visits I made to classes, I observed teachers using better targeted questioning that involves all pupils and supports their learning well. Individual support for students by teachers and teaching assistants is effective. You are increasingly involving parents more fully in their children's learning and ensure that they attend school regularly.

Governors are an asset to the school. They have deep knowledge of its strengths and areas for development because they are frequent visitors to the school and involve themselves with increasing confidence in all aspects of its work. Governors have further improved their committee structures and sought new governors to enhance their work. Governors hold regular meetings with different groups of students to ascertain their views about the school and how well students are progressing. Governors make regular challenges to senior leaders to ensure that the momentum of improvement does not slacken. They contribute strongly to the school's capacity for further improvement.

External support

The school's close links with the LA have had a significant impact in raising students' achievement. The LA has provided ongoing support from a consultant, to strengthen the moderation of students' work in English and leadership and management at all levels. This has helped to secure the improvements in teaching and learning over the last year.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing
Her Majesty's Inspector