

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 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



27 March 2015

Alison Hayes
Lodge Park Academy
Shetland Way
Corby
NN17 2JH

Dear Mrs Hayes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lodge Park Academy

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in month and year. 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 school should take further action to:

- strengthen teachers' understanding of how best to meet the needs of disadvantaged students in their day-to-day teaching
- ensure that subject leaders and their teams regularly review how well disadvantaged students are doing so that they can act quickly to identify and remedy underachievement
- ensure actions taken to raise students' attainment through cross-curricular numeracy are checked to see if they are working.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, students, teachers and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the David Ross Education Trust. I looked at a range of documentation, including the academy's most recent

self-evaluation and improvement plan. I also looked at records regarding the quality of teaching and marking and the school's latest achievement data. I made short visits to ten lessons.

Context

There have been no contextual changes since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

Since the inspection, you have strengthened monitoring systems and created greater clarity in lines of accountability. These changes have strengthened the senior leadership team's knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching overall and marking in particular.

Clear improvements are evident in the frequency and quality of marking. Students report that their books are marked consistently and helpfully in nearly all their classes. Examples of very good practice in marking are seen more widely than before. In particular, students in Year 11, and increasingly in Year 10, receive high quality, personalised feedback in response to mock examinations. The feedback is helpful because it very carefully diagnoses where students' individual strengths and weaknesses lie. Feedback from mock examinations in mathematics is particularly helpful. In other strong practice seen, students in religious education are set bespoke homework tasks designed to directly address the specific weaknesses in their work. The impact of this approach is seen clearly in students' books where previous weaknesses sometimes become areas of strength.

The assessment of teachers' marking has now moved on from checking teachers' compliance with the school's policies to assessing the quality of their written feedback. While there is some very strong practice, not all staff provide sufficiently precise guidance to make enough difference to students' attainment. Monitoring of marking does not always assess how much difference it is making to students' attainment.

Middle leaders are playing an important and increasingly effective role in bringing about improvements as a result of the good training and support they have received. They now monitor the work of their teams rigorously and have the confidence and authority to challenge weaker practice. Strong lines of communication, together with effective quality assurance from senior leaders ensure that staff are working to consistently high expectations across the academy.

The quality of teaching is improving. You have put effective systems in place to improve weaker teaching. Regular learning walks ensure that senior leaders know where improvements are needed but also where the best practice can be found so it can be shared. Staff have taken the more rigorous scrutiny of their work in their stride, not least because the regular feedback they now receive is helping to

strengthen their practice. They also enjoy receiving praise postcards used which acknowledge particularly effective practice.

Following the section 5 inspection, the academy quickly commissioned an external review of its use of pupil premium funding. This review has helped identify the steps needed to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students. A member of the senior leadership team has very recently been given responsibility for raising the achievement of disadvantaged students and, in a short period of time, has made a clear difference to these students' attendance. Following the external review, helpful systems have quickly been put in place to ensure that the impact of additional funding on students' achievement can be carefully checked. Teachers across the school are now much more aware of which students may need additional support although the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium is not always discussed in the weekly department meetings. In addition, teachers are not well enough informed about how best to help disadvantaged students overcome potential barriers to learning.

The improvements you have made are beginning to have a positive impact on students' academic progress. There remains, however, considerable variation in achievement across year groups and subjects. For example, while progress in Year 11 mathematics is much improved on last year, progress in English has declined. While high proportions of students in Year 10 are currently on track to make and exceed the progress expected in both English and mathematics, rates of progress in Year 9 are poor, particularly in English. Achievement remains variable in science and in some foundation subjects, including design and technology, history and business studies. Higher attaining students are not making the progress they should.

Strategies to raise achievement in mathematics by giving greater focus to numeracy across the curriculum are beginning to be put in place, though the academy's numeracy policy does not indicate how the impact of these strategies will be assessed.

You and your staff recognise that there is much to be done if the academy is to secure a good quality of education for all its students by the time of the next inspection. Nevertheless, your work is underpinned by a high quality improvement plan, effective governance and strong support from the Academy Trust.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. You agreed to send me an update on the academy's progress before the end of the Summer term.

External support

The academy continues to receive good support from its sponsor. This ranges from the wealth of enrichment opportunities arranged and funded by the Trust, financial

support which has transformed the school environment and very regular monitoring and scrutiny of the academy's work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for insert local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton
Her Majesty's Inspector