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Mr Will Scott
Headteacher
Sir John Gleed School
Neville Avenue
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Lincolnshire
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Dear Mr Scott

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Sir John Gleed School

Following my visit to your academy on 22 October 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 academy's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you and members of your senior leadership team. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the CfBT Schools Trust. The integrated statement of action and school improvement plan was evaluated, along with the information about 2015 GCSE and post-16 outcomes and the academy's own self-evaluation. I conducted a learning walk with the deputy headteacher and together we observed learning within science and mathematics. I met formally with pupils new to the academy and those currently studying GCSE and post-16 courses.

Context

The restructure of the senior leadership team has taken place and new leaders are now in post.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders, the governing body and the CfBT Schools Trust have not made sure that the academy is well placed to be removed from serious weaknesses.

The integrated statement of action and school improvement plan is not fit for purpose. The planned actions to address the areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection are not focused or strategic enough. Many actions are 'jobs to do' and it is not made clear how these jobs will secure the rapid improvement the academy needs. Actions are reviewed using a colour scale depending on whether an action has been 'completed', is 'in progress' or if there has been 'slippage'. When actions are reviewed, there is not enough consideration about whether they have had any impact. Monitoring is focused on whether jobs have been completed rather than if they have made any difference.

Some of the information on pupils' progress is wrong. Too much information relies on inaccurate assessment at subject level, particularly mathematics. This means that leaders, the governing body and the trust are not able to effectively monitor the progress that individual pupils and groups of pupils are making. It also means that teachers cannot accurately plan for learning to ensure that individual pupils, and groups of pupils, make the progress they should. The academy will not move from serious weaknesses until this issue is addressed. There is no time to be 'surprised' by a set of results in 2016.

The governing body and the trust are not effectively holding leaders to account. The integrated statement of action and academy improvement plan is not fit for purpose and the information on pupils' progress is inaccurate. Leaders, the governing body and the trust are unable to accurately monitor the progress the academy is making against the areas identified at the section 5 inspection.

We discussed the leadership of the academy. You have a group of committed senior leaders. It is important that their energies are focused on the actions that will have most impact. Middle leadership requires improvement in many subject areas. Some of these leaders need focused and closely monitored support to make sure that assessment is accurate and teaching is helping all pupils to make progress.

I conducted a learning walk with a senior leader. We observed learning in mathematics and science and looked at the work in books. I spoke with pupils. There is evidence of improvement in the way that work is marked and feedback is given to pupils. The yellow sticker system is being used and the pupils I spoke with said that they appreciated their work being marked in this way. I saw good examples of how the feedback given to a pupil helped them to progress their learning. I did also see examples where the marking policy was not being followed. Marking and feedback remain inconsistent.

I spoke formally with pupils. The pupils in Years 12, 11 and 10 who I spoke with said that they recognised that improvement had taken place since the section 5 inspection. They were clear that behaviour was much better and 'not really an issue any more'. They welcomed the yellow sticker feedback and the fact that marking is now more regular. One pupil said that she was 'far clearer how to improve' and that she was not 'just getting negative comments all the time'. The pupils also appreciated the homework schedule and said that things felt more organised. When asked, pupils were not clear about the exam grades they were aiming for.

The Year 7 pupils I spoke with said that they were enjoying the academy. They said that they had been helped to settle well and that they had been 'really ready to move from their primary school and come to Sir John Glead'. They appreciated learning new things and having subject specialists teach them. Too many of these pupils said that they were currently learning about subjects at the same level that they had covered previously in their primary school. All of the pupils said that they could be challenged more in class.

The effective use of achievement information to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should is an urgent priority.

All the pupils I spoke with said that they appreciated the way in which you and the senior leaders are on corridors and in social areas at break and at lunchtime. One senior pupil said that 'it makes a real difference to be welcomed to the school by the headteacher every morning – it shows that he really knows and cares about us'.

The CfBT Schools Trust is providing support to the academy. This includes subject-specific support to science, English and mathematics. The trust is also supporting the implementation of an information system so that pupils' progress can be tracked. You and the deputy headteacher attend the trust networks and middle leaders have access to specialist meetings. The executive headteacher, previously provided by the trust, left the school in July. There are plans for further leadership support, for two days per week, to commence in October. The support provided by the trust has not been effective in ensuring that the academy improves rapidly.

The pupil premium review suggested at the section 5 inspection in March 2015 is due to take place in October 2015. This is not a swift enough response.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The academy's improvement planning is not fit for purpose.

The CfBT Schools Trust statement of action is not fit for purpose.

I intend to conduct a second monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector