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18 April 2016

Ms Mair Hughes
Principal
Hampton Academy
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Dear Ms Hughes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hampton Academy

Following my visit to your school on 16 March 2016, 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 June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in June 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and the proposed new and local multi-academy trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. However, the current trust's actions have not been effective.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, and groups of Year 11 and sixth-form pupils to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the chair of the academy council, the chief executive officer of the Learning Schools Trust, a representative of the local authority, and the headteachers of Waldegrave School and Teddington School to discuss the actions taken and the future trust arrangements for the school. I evaluated the school's improvement plans and scrutinised school documentation, including recent review and monitoring reports. Together with you, I made short visits to eight lessons,

including mathematics and English. During these visits and when meeting Year 11 pupils, I paid particular attention to the quality of assessment and the standards of pupils' work.

Context

Teaching staff have changed considerably since the inspection. Staffing is now stable. The arrangements for the support of pupils who have special education needs or disability have changed under the leadership of a new coordinator. Leadership of the sixth form and key stage 4 changed in January 2016 with the appointment of two co-leaders of the sixth form and heads of Year 10 and 11, all from within school staff. The school's leadership is being strengthened, with additional assistant and deputy principals in the process of being appointed. The director of mathematics post remains vacant.

The school is set to become part of a local multi-academy trust of five academies from September 2016. Both Waldegrave School and Teddington School have been actively working and supporting the school since November 2015. A memorandum of understanding with these schools to formalise this arrangement was due at the time of the inspection. From September 2016, the sixth form will be part of a collaborative with these two academies.

Main findings

Under your skilful and determined leadership, and support from the associate principal and other senior leaders, improvement is being secured. You have successfully stabilised staffing and recognise that retaining staff, together with removing the remaining inconsistencies in teaching, is key to the school's journey to good. The action plan is comprehensive, sharply focused on the improvement areas and based on accurate self-assessment. Timescales, success criteria, performance indicators and milestones all provide a road map for improvement. Rigorous and triangulated monitoring and evaluation systems enable the school leaders to check impact and make adjustments as needed.

In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was below the national average. This was below the school's expectations because a few pupils did not achieve good passes in English although they performed better in mathematics. Too few pupils made better than expected progress or achieved the highest grades. Disadvantaged pupils made better progress than their peers, because of the support provided to them in Year 11. This was also the finding of the pupil premium review completed in July 2015. It was also noted that such focus was not consistent across the school. This is no longer the case, with better support and careful tracking of disadvantaged pupils in all year groups now in place.

You have strongly focused on securing improvements in pupils' behaviour, in the quality of teaching and assessment, and in accelerating pupils' learning. There is a clear shift in the ethos and culture across the school. Current assessment information shows that more pupils are now making better than expected progress.

Staff and pupils both told me that behaviour has improved. The vast majority of staff and pupils consistently uphold and understand the behaviour policy. Pupils were seen to get on well together in the social areas. From my visits to lessons, I found pupils showed positive attitudes to learning. The quality and quantity of work in pupils' books also reflected this.

In our joint visits to lessons, we agreed that some inconsistencies in teaching remain. However, we did see the impact of professional development across all the classrooms we visited. We saw teachers interacting more with pupils, asking challenging questions and providing a variety of tasks and activities, which captured pupils' interests. As one pupil said, 'Teachers talk less now and lessons are more interesting.' However, in a few lessons, the pace of learning was slow and teachers did not engender pupils with the same energy and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils' books show that work is appropriately pitched and challenging. Teachers' routine assessment provides pupils with clear guidance on the areas they need to improve. Teachers are also using the information from assessment, for Year 11 pupils in particular, to target interventions and compensate for previous underachievement. We also agreed as we toured the school that the learning environments in corridors, social areas and classrooms are bland and lack inspiration for pupils' academic and wider learning.

Across the school, morale is high. Both subject leaders and the new heads of year are relishing the ownership and challenge of improvement in their areas. They are monitoring the quality of teaching and now ensure that teachers are fully held to account for the progress of pupils they teach. This careful monitoring by middle and senior leaders is identifying those teachers whose teaching is not yet good. Effective support, for example from the 'developing good practice group', is having real impact in helping these teachers to improve. New teaching arrangements in English are supporting higher expectations for teaching as well as greater challenge for higher-attaining pupils. The focus on raising the attainment of the most able is reflected across the school, including in mathematics. Support for those who are least able has been restructured with early assessment of needs, better support and tracking of impact which is improving the progress of these pupils.

Key stage 3 leaders have developed new schemes of work for pupils' personal, social and health education, and identified opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The impact of this is most apparent at key stage 3 as pupils now have a better knowledge of other faiths and cultures than previously. In monitoring the impact, leaders identified concerns in Year 8 where absence rates and poor behaviour incidents were higher than in other year groups. As a trial project, leaders have developed further their work on pupils' spiritual, moral, social

and cultural awareness to improve the ethos and culture of this year group. Their rapid actions show a reduction in persistent absence, fewer recorded behaviour incidents and early signs of better rates of progress.

After the last inspection, the Learning Schools Trust put in place a review cycle and gave the academy council a greater role to monitor and challenge the work of the school. However, these actions, although well intended, lacked rigour.

Consequently, governance provided by the Learning Schools Trust continues to be ineffective. New governance arrangements are now in place through the new multi-academy trust board. While they await formal agreement of the new trust from the Department for Education, the headteachers of Waldegrave School and Teddington School, both members of the new board, are providing strategic vision, drive, and challenge.

External support

From the time of the last inspection until November 2015, the school received very limited external support from the Learning Schools Trust beyond a few days of consultant support, mainly focused on the sixth form. However, this changed in November 2015 when the leaders of Waldegrave and Teddington schools began working with the school. The Learning Schools Trust are fully supporting and cooperating with the transition arrangements. With the local authority, a six-week in-depth review of the school was undertaken to establish the scope and need of support. The local authority is now actively working with the school and providing support. For example, in mathematics, a consultant is working to support leadership and develop new schemes of work. Highly effective and extensive support from the headteachers and specialist staff at the new partner academies is already demonstrating impact. The new sixth form co-leaders have received extensive support from the director of sixth form at Waldegrave School to assist them in their new roles and in the recruitment from Year 11 into the sixth form for September 2016. Gaps in the provision of teaching for sixth-form business and chemistry have now been addressed and teachers appointed to fill these gaps. Effective support is given to improve training and mentoring for newly qualified teachers. Middle leaders, including of mathematics and English, are benefiting from the experience and expertise of colleagues in good and outstanding schools. This is helping them to have higher expectations and improve monitoring of teaching quality and follow-up in their areas.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy council, the chief executive officer, the headteachers of Waldegrave School and Teddington School, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett
Her Majesty's Inspector