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Mr M Rhatigan
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rhatigan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingsbury School and Sports College

Following my visit to your school on 28 April 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 November 2015. 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the level of challenge in lessons engages, motivates and stretches the most able pupils to improve their learning, leading to increased progress and attainment
- develop an assessment system to collect more objective information on pupils who join the school without information about their starting points.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other members of the school's leadership team including those responsible for safeguarding, governors who are members of the interim executive board, and the director of education of Fairfax

Multi-Academy Trust (FMAT). I also spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I undertook brief visits to a number of lessons accompanied by you, where I spoke to pupils and looked at examples of their work. I evaluated a range of documents and records, including minutes of meetings, analysis of pupils' outcomes and reports from the local authority.

Context

You joined the school as headteacher prior to the previous section 5 inspection. You have restructured the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team including the appointment of an additional deputy headteacher and creation of an extended leadership team. The school currently receives external support from FMAT and an academy order has been passed to formally join FMAT in September 2016. An interim executive board continues to provide governance at the school and an additional sub-committee has been created to specifically evaluate the school's safeguarding provision. Successful recruitment of staff has resulted in several recent appointments for the start of the coming academic year and you expect the school to be fully staffed from September 2016.

Main findings

The accuracy of assessment information has increased as a result of improvements in the school's systems to monitor pupils' progress. For example, key assessments are subject to external checking and review resulting in validation of teachers' judgements. Also, the information is presented in a more accessible manner. Leaders and teachers have an accurate picture of the progress of pupils currently in the school and can quickly identify where effective interventions are taking place. Leaders also use assessment information, along with other indicators of performance, to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils and the quality of their teaching. Teachers describe this process as rigorous but also as developmental, leading to improvements in their practice. Additional support can also be quickly put in place when required to improve teaching. Some pupils join the school without information about their starting points. Currently, teachers compare these pupils to their peers to make judgements about their starting points in order to track their progress. A more objective assessment would further contribute to the robustness of school assessment information.

Governors use assessment information to hold leaders to account, challenge underperformance and ensure that effective actions are carried out. The quality and depth of this information now mean that governors have a more detailed picture of the progress of different groups of pupils. Governors can identify pupils who require additional focus and intervention.

During my visit, the teachers I spoke with are now able to analyse pupils' progress information to inform their planning following valuable training. Teachers demonstrate confidence in working with this information and use it effectively to

plan their lessons. Pupils are increasingly given work with the appropriate degree of challenge, and cover topics that reflect gaps in their knowledge and understanding. For example, in mathematics, analysis of a recent mock examination identified certain topics which the teacher planned to revisit over a series of lessons. Additional assessment allowed the impact of this additional focus to be measured. Teachers' questioning during lessons enables ongoing assessment of pupils' progress and learning activities are modified as appropriate. Information provided by the school identifies that the most able pupils who have been in the school the longest are not making the same rates of progress as pupils with similar starting points nationally. Teachers have not yet had as much impact on these pupils' outcomes as they have for some other groups of pupils as the level of challenge for these learners has not been sufficiently high.

Teachers now regularly meet leaders' expectations regarding marking and written feedback. When most effective, feedback is used by pupils to improve their work, for example using skills identified by their teachers more successfully in the next task. Leaders currently monitor teachers' compliance with these expectations, and are now ready to develop their monitoring activities to evaluate the impact of teachers' written feedback on subsequent work in more depth.

There is robust and focused leadership of safeguarding in the school. Appropriate retrospective checks have been carried out. The school is confident that adults who work there are appropriately vetted. Staff continue to receive up-to-date training in relevant legislation and guidance, and new and temporary members of staff receive clear safeguarding induction when they arrive at the school. As a result, all adults are aware of their responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils at the school.

The identification of a senior leader to be responsible for promoting fundamental British values has put these at the heart of the school. Strategic development is assured through creation of detailed plans, and a range of actions have already been taken. For example, teachers identify where British values can be promoted within current learning opportunities. Pupils develop a sense of how Britishness pervades many aspects of life, so preparing them well for the future. Recent training means that staff are confident in promoting British values, and welcome opportunities to share their practice with colleagues.

External support

The school has benefited from highly effective and focused external support provided by FMAT. This work is supporting improvements in the quality of teaching and of leadership. The director of education of FMAT plays a very active role in supporting the school's improvements. The local authority's commissioned services are actively and regularly involved in monitoring the school's progress and hold an accurate view of progress being made by school leaders.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath
Her Majesty's Inspector