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Ms Palmer
Principal
Nightingale Academy
34 Turin Road
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Dear Ms Palmer

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Nightingale Academy

Following my visit to your school on 2 December 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 May 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the section 5 inspection before in June 2014, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- further improve teachers' planning in order to accelerate the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- increase the pace at which whole-school numeracy strategies are developed and implemented, so that pupils improve their skills across subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with: the principal; other senior leaders; middle leaders; pupils; the special educational needs coordinators; and the regional education advisor from the trust. Those meetings were held in order to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's plans for improvement were

evaluated. The inspector visited nine lessons with the principal and visited the learning resource centre. Documents were scrutinised, including: planning documentation for the sixth form and special educational needs provision; assessment information; teaching and learning reviews; department reviews undertaken by the trust; minutes of governors' meetings; and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.

Context

Since the last inspection, three new members of staff have joined the senior leadership team. The role of special educational needs coordinator is currently being handed over to a newly appointed member of staff who is due to take up the substantive role from January 2017. Leaders reviewed 16 to 19 study programmes following the last inspection. A new sixth-form leader is now in place and programmes have been refreshed to better accommodate students' needs. The trust has recently reviewed its schools' governing bodies. The trust's review of this governing body resulted in a reconstitution with better-defined roles. Leaders have sought opportunities to work with schools and experts within the local authority and the trust.

Main findings

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's progress since the last inspection. Plans for development are focused upon the correct areas and strategies are planned within appropriate timeframes. Leaders draw upon resources and support from the trust and further external support brokered by the principal with local schools. The trust's regional education advisor provides appropriately robust challenge to leaders, and holds them to account more stringently. As a result, standards are improving in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, leaders are pragmatic about the work that is still to do. Outcomes are improving but current information indicates that the rate of improvement is still variable between subjects. Leaders accurately identify that developments in pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum have been slower than for literacy. Senior leaders have improved their identification of pupils' needs. For example, pupils who join the school with little spoken English are well supported through additional sessions, which are linked to the literacy skills they require across their subjects.

Leaders have established more effective routines which monitor and support developments in teaching and learning. This is supplemented by more-systematic and tailored professional development. Pupils reported to the inspector that improved consistency in the teaching staff has further improved their learning experience. This is because they are able to establish working relationships with teachers that strengthen their positive attitudes to learning. The standard of assessment across departments has been strengthened by external and internal moderation. This has also improved the reliability of information that teachers use to plan lessons. Intervention and support for pupils are timelier and respond better to pupils' needs. The most able pupils are now routinely stretched by teachers

planning more challenging activities. Fewer instances of low-level disruption occur, because pupils are more often challenged by the work set by teachers.

The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now more accurately identified and understood than previously. Leaders track pupils' progress well through the whole-school assessment system. Teaching assistants have been redeployed to subject areas so that their work is more focused upon pupils' needs within those subjects. The trust provides appropriate external support for this area of the school's provision and is due to conduct a review of the recent developments in the New Year. However, teachers are not yet planning consistently well to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is, in part, because the incoming special educational needs coordinator is yet to start their work with subject leaders, which is intended to improve the way that teachers plan.

The sixth form has undergone significant change since the last inspection. Leaders recognised that the existing provision was not effective enough at providing students with high-quality study programmes. The review of 16 to 19 study programmes has resulted in new leadership, a revised and more effective programme of enrichment and personal development opportunities, and course offers that the school can better support. Students are now able to participate in work experience and have regular personal, social, health and economic education sessions woven into their weekly programmes. The number on roll in Year 12 this year is far higher than previously and current information indicates a further expansion next year. Teaching and learning continues to be a strength in the sixth form. However, the curriculum remains limited due to the small numbers of students. Plans for expansion include introducing more subjects, such as humanities and English literature.

External support

The school receives effective and robust challenge from the trust's regional education advisor. This further strengthens the way that governors hold leaders to account for their work. The school receives effective governors' training from the local authority. The school benefits from subject-specific support from the trust's subject leaders, including assessment checking. Work with Highlands School is developing middle leadership's skills, in addition to providing support for English, for the school's special educational needs provision and for governance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Enfield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matt Tiplin
Her Majesty's Inspector