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Mr Dale Jackson
Principal
Kingswood Academy
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Dear Mr Jackson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingswood Academy

Following my visit to your school on 7 June 2017, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the trust 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:

- sharpen the evaluation of monitoring information to successfully pinpoint where further improvements are needed
- improve the attendance of particular groups of pupils where levels of absence remain a concern
- ensure that pupils who are at a higher risk of exclusion are supported to engage fully with their learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three groups of pupils, a representative of the local governing board and the regional education advisor for the trust to discuss the actions taken since the last monitoring inspection. I also visited a series of lessons with the head of school and reviewed information relating to behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the school's work to safeguard pupils.

Context

There have been a number of staffing changes in the school since the last monitoring inspection. New appointments have included both experienced and more recently qualified teachers. The school will be fully staffed in September 2017.

Main findings

Leaders have continued to build on the improvements evident at the last monitoring inspection. Their ambition for the school and high aspirations for pupils' success are central to their vision and determined approach to securing improvement. Pupils who spoke with me commented positively on how they feel the quality of teaching and behaviour, in lessons and around the school, is improving. There has also been a marked increase in the number of parents selecting the school as their first choice of secondary school, reflecting how the quality of education provided is being viewed more favourably by the local community.

For pupils in all year groups, new teacher appointments mean that there is less reliance on supply teachers and non-specialist staff, which is helping pupils to make better progress. The wide-ranging additional support provided for those currently in Year 11 is valued by pupils. Strategies, such as residential study visits, additional timetabled lessons and academic mentoring, have made pupils feel more confident and better prepared academically for their examinations.

The school-wide focus on promoting pupils' personal development and welfare is supporting improved attitudes to learning in classrooms, with pupils increasingly keen to succeed. Lessons visited were calm and purposeful and pupils confirmed that this was typical of almost all lessons now. Pupils who spoke with me were confident that staff deal with behaviour and bullying issues effectively when they arise. Leaders use a range of strategies to deal with more significant behaviour incidents to try to minimise the risk of repetition, including the use of outside agencies where appropriate. While case studies reflect a number of successes, a small minority of pupils persist in behaving in a way that falls short of the school's expectations, and rates of fixed-term exclusion remain too high. Careful tracking of the attendance of different groups of pupils has enabled school leaders to take targeted action with individuals, which is beginning to bear fruit.

However, leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to improve attendance for some pupils.

School leaders have continued to review the range of subjects and qualifications offered to pupils in order to secure better outcomes. For example, some adjustments for those currently in Year 11 are enabling pupils to experience more success. Stronger guidance for pupils who have been making their GCSE choices for September 2017 is helping to make sure that they are taking qualifications best suited to their needs and aspirations.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's current strengths and priorities for improvement. The quality of all aspects of the school's work is checked frequently and a broad range of evidence is gathered. However, evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning in lessons and work in books does not focus quite sharply enough on identifying the finer detail of aspects of teaching that still need to develop.

External support

School improvement has been supported effectively by using expertise both within and beyond the trust. For example, the trust's English and mathematics specialists have worked with the respective departments to improve the quality of teaching and leadership. The trust's regional education adviser, along with the local governing board, are providing the support and challenge that leaders need.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston-upon-Hull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector