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Mr Jon Hamp
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hamp

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Springfields Academy

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 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. This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the residential facility by social care regulatory inspectors. The report on the residential facility is published separately.

Senior leaders and trustees 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:

- increase teachers' expectations of pupils, so that the rates of progress pupils make and their attainment are more in line with those of other pupils nationally
- extend teachers' skills to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and scientific skills in subjects across the curriculum
- improve communication with parents, so that they better understand what their child is learning, the progress children make and how they can help their child to learn.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and members of the trust board. I had a telephone discussion with the school's improvement partner to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and action plans. I observed pupils learning in class and looked at pupils' books to evaluate the progress they are making. I met with middle leaders and reviewed pupils' progress information, the behaviour log and the record of exclusions. Social care regulatory inspectors and I also scrutinised records relating to safeguarding.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection, you have made significant staffing changes which have strengthened the quality of teaching and learning. The staff have strong subject knowledge and show a better understanding of pupils' personal and academic needs. In most subjects, they plan lessons which engage learners and allow pupils to make steady progress, including the most able pupils. However, teachers now need to ensure that pupils bolster their knowledge and are able to apply their writing skills, mathematical proficiency and scientific concepts in subjects across the curriculum in all year groups.

Since the previous inspection, you have worked with staff to embed routines and created an environment where pupils forge strong relationships with other pupils and with staff. As a result, good order is maintained and pupils are able to make steady progress. The time is now ripe for leaders to raise their expectations of the standards pupils can achieve to accelerate the rate of progress pupils make.

Leaders have introduced a new tracking system which is in its early days. This development and the more frequent assessment of pupils' English and mathematical skills are helping leaders to more accurately evaluate the progress pupils make.

You have arranged for the most able pupils to attend other schools and local colleges to follow courses at appropriate levels that allow them to achieve the standards of which they are capable.

In lessons and at social times, pupils work and play well together. Staff engage well with pupils and provide a plethora of opportunities for them to engage in sport. In addition to this, staff now better understand pupils' individual needs and plan more closely to meet those needs. As a result, exclusions and incidents of poor behaviour have declined dramatically. Similarly, the need for physical intervention is reducing.

You have undertaken some work to improve communications with parents, such as the redesign of the annual report. While this is clearer, there is further work to do to make it easily readable by parents. Although the school's website meets the requirements for the information academies should publish, the information about the curriculum is scant. There is insufficient detail that parents can use to help their child in their learning. Some parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire do not feel that the school communicates with them well.

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know the pupils well and are able to quickly pick up on any safeguarding concerns. Staff and governors' training is up to date. The records of exclusions and physical interventions are adequate.

External support

You, your governing body and staff are drawing well on the support provided by your independent school improvement partner. She provides valuable external reports, data analysis and training to improve the effectiveness of monitoring pupils' progress on a regular basis. This has added rigour to your self-evaluation.

Furthermore, moderation of work with local schools is helping teachers develop increasingly accurate assessments of pupils' work, particularly in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland
Her Majesty's Inspector