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Dr Cathy Taylor
Sirius Academy West
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Dear Dr Taylor

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sirius Academy West

Following my visit to your school on 21 January 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

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

The school should take further action to:

- ensure curriculum plans are consistently implemented through teaching and learning across the school
- continue to provide the professional training which leaders, teachers and staff require, so that the capacity to improve is further developed
- ensure that strategies and interventions are in place which will have an impact on improving attendance.

Evidence

During the inspection, I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, who is also the chief executive officer (CEO) of The Constellation Trust, senior and middle leaders. I met with members of the local governing body. I also talked with pupils in meetings and during lesson visits.

I visited a range of lessons and activities with senior leaders.

During this first monitoring visit, I focused on the areas for improvement linked to the quality of education, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and leadership and management.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes in the leadership and management of the school. New curriculum leaders have been appointed, for example in English and mathematics. Very recently, the CEO of the trust assumed the role of interim headteacher after the departure of the permanent headteacher at the end of the autumn term 2019.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection in November 2018, leaders have been quick to take the effective action required to make the necessary improvements. Leadership and management across the school have been strengthened. The curriculum policy of the school has been reviewed and evaluated. The school has now moved from a two-year key stage 3 curriculum, to one of three years. The expectations the school has of its pupils have also been reviewed and raised. Staff and pupils are positive about the changes which the trust and school leaders have made. Leaders and teachers across the school have been involved in the quality assurance and improvement strategies which have been adopted.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have identified that the curriculum offered to pupils was not meeting their needs. Leaders have now embedded a curriculum which contains four pathways, all of which are designed to more closely meet the needs of the full range of pupils. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of pupils on an English Baccalaureate pathway. Pupils are now on pathways which support their ambitions after they leave the academy.

Leaders have introduced a consistent approach to planning the curriculum. Plans for learning are ordered and sequenced so that they build upon pupils' prior knowledge. The implementation of these new curriculum plans is well developed, although leaders recognise there is more work to do to improve this further. During my visit I saw at first hand the improvements in the quality of education since the last inspection. Pupils' work evidenced a consistent approach from teachers in making

sure that high expectations are being met. Pupils are consistently completing challenging work which builds upon their prior learning. The routine monitoring of pupils' work by teachers ensures that any gaps in learning are identified quickly and effectively. In the lessons I visited, missing or incomplete work in pupils' books was rare. Those pupils who are disadvantaged and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported effectively in their learning too. The curriculum plans I scrutinised identify clearly the key components and concepts which assessments focus on. They also identify sequences of learning with clear end points.

In the past, the school has made use of alternative provision to accommodate a significant number of pupils who had become disengaged from their learning. Leaders can evidence that the use of alternative provision has now reduced. They point to the impact of a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils as a significant factor in this improvement. Pupils are engaged in their learning. They believe the choices open to them will help them to achieve their goals.

Pupils attend more often. The number who are persistently absent is reducing. The pupils I spoke to during my visit confirmed this. Behaviour has also improved. Pupils also reported that in their view behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. They report that changes to the behaviour systems are understood by pupils and they believe they are fair. Pupils also say that teachers and staff are more consistent in using the school's behaviour systems than they were before.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have received the training they require to support the development of the curriculum and improve the quality of education further. Leaders' self-evaluation of the progress made since the previous inspection is accurate and supported by the evidence collected during this monitoring visit.

The school's plans to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the previous inspection are effective. They outline clearly and accurately the priorities and actions needed to improve the school. I saw evidence of these actions in practice during this inspection.

Members of the local governing body understand the school's priorities well. They are knowledgeable about the school's actions and evaluate these with rigour. The trust and board members have strengthened senior leadership through new appointments, including that of an interim headteacher.

External support

The school works in partnership with other schools in the multi-academy trust. Leaders have worked with primary schools within the trust to develop the sequencing and planning of the curriculum in order to build upon the work covered by pupils in Years 5 and 6 of their primary school education. This support is beginning to have a positive impact.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston Upon Hull City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Barry Found

Her Majesty's Inspector