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28 November 2012

Mrs K Robinson
Headteacher
Richard Rose Morton Academy
Wigton Road
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA2 6LB

Dear Mrs Robinson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Richard Rose Morton Academy.

Following my visit to your academy on 27 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and a member of the governing body. The academy improvement plan was evaluated, with supporting documents. Short visits were made to a small number of lessons in a range of subjects.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one member of staff has left the academy.

Main findings

The academy's improvement plan is clearly focused on the key priority areas identified at the previous inspection. The plan identifies actions that senior leaders are taking to secure key measurable performance outcomes for the end of the academic years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014. The plan, however, does not set out clearly how often these actions will be checked throughout the year and precisely what the academy's expectations are to indicate ongoing success. Also the accountability of subject leaders for securing improvement is not clearly defined.

Actions taken by senior leaders, to date, include whole-school and individual targeted training for teachers on aspects of their work that require improvement, the introduction of more rigorous systems to tackle persistent absence and a full review, and subsequent raising, of students' achievement and attendance targets. Early impact is evident in the improved attendance of the majority of students with previously high levels of absence. School leaders have monitored teachers' and students' work through a range of observations and work scrutiny. In lessons seen, students were fully involved in their learning and behaviour around the academy gave no cause for concern.

The governing body has continued to monitor and challenge the work of academy leaders. Leaders report regularly to committees and to the full governing body.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the academy, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- review the improvement plan to ensure that the impact of the academy's actions is checked regularly and can be measured easily by leaders and governors
- ensure that leaders, at all levels, play a full part in monitoring and evaluating the academy's work.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Since the previous inspection, the academy has continued to work with a National Teaching school on all aspects of school improvement work, including teaching and leadership.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Richard Rose Federation Governing Body.

Yours sincerely
Angela Headon

Her Majesty's Inspector