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Mr Richard Williman
Headteacher
Withernsea High School Specialising In Humanities
Hull Road
Withernsea
HU19 2EQ

Dear Mr Williman

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Withernsea High School Specialising In Humanities

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2013, 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 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a range of other actions taken since the section 5 inspection were reviewed. The support plan prepared by the local authority and reports from their recent visit were also considered.

Context

Since the inspection three new governors have been appointed and there has been one staffing change.

Main findings

The headteacher and other senior leaders have revised the school improvement plan so that it includes the key recommendations from the November inspection. The plan's overall effectiveness is limited by a lack of clear measurable outcomes which can be evaluated to assess the impact of actions taken to improve students' progress. One such action is the support and challenge senior leaders are providing for individual and groups of teachers so that they can improve their practice. Regular observations and scrutiny of student's books are common features throughout the school. This work is informing training sessions and

giving senior leaders a secure baseline from which to tackle inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Middle leaders, are becoming involved and skilled in this work, they are often paired together so that learning from the best is now commonplace.

An audit of governors' skills and knowledge is about to be undertaken so that they can work more closely with senior leaders. Since the section 5 inspection, governors have become more knowledgeable about how pupil premium funding is being spent and the minutes of their recent meetings record significant challenge to senior leaders regarding the impact this money is having on student outcomes. Governors recognise that while they receive evidence about the school from a variety of sources, they need to systematically record information following their visits.

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 school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that the school improvement plan identifies how the impact of different activities will be measured and evaluated to demonstrate improvements in student outcomes
- establish a mechanism for governors to record information following their visits to the school.

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

External support

Since the inspection the local authority have continued to conduct regular review meetings and monitoring visits with senior leaders to check the progress that is being made. The programme for the monitoring visits is agreed between the local authority and the headteacher and enables those involved to gain first hand classroom evidence of provision. In addition to monitoring the areas identified in the inspection report, other aspects of provision are also checked following work by local authority consultants. The local authority support plan lacks clearly measurable success criteria that would help its officers to gauge the effectiveness of intervention. Reports written by the local authority do not clearly evaluate the value added to the school's effectiveness by any external work. This means that measuring the impact of the work done by the local authority is not possible and the support plan needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Senior leaders have successfully established links with other partners, in particular through the headteachers' association. It is, however, too early to judge the impact of this work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector