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Mark Cottingham
da Vinci Community College
St Andrew's View
Breadsall
Derby
DE21 4ET

Dear Mr Cottingham

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to da Vinci Community College

Following my visit to your school on 1 March 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 December 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, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body. A representative of the local authority was spoken with on the telephone. A tour of the school was undertaken and a meeting was conducted with a small group of students. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

There are currently four teachers on maternity leave, and three temporary teachers covering their work.

Main findings

The school remains on a strong upward trajectory from being one of the lowest performing schools in the country in 2004. Actions to improve the school are very clearly framed in a coherent and thorough development plan, which continues to

address the long-term improvement of the school. School systems for improving the quality of teaching are good, although not always sufficiently closely linked to professional development targets. There is an appropriate focus on progress from Year 7, and students' targets are ambitious and well known. Marking is improving and students are aware of the next steps that they need to take in order to improve.

Following the inspection in December 2012, the governing body has re-examined its processes to ensure that it has effective methods for monitoring the progress of the school. Governors have a very clear view of the ethos and values they wish to see in the school, and are very confident that the current school leadership is taking the school in the right direction. Most members of the governing body, although committed and with a good range of skills, have to work hard to balance the time they give to the school with job and family commitments.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

HMI will offer additional support:

- to members of the governing body if they wish to explore possible alternative structures and strategies to exercise their responsibilities for holding the school to account
- to members of the senior leadership team if they wish to explore specific areas of good practice beyond the local authority area.

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

External support

The school has made very good use of the support offered to the school by the local authority's school improvement officer, who has led training, participated in lesson observations and contributed to subject area reviews. The school is a key participant in the Derby Educational Improvement Partnership, a network of other schools in the local authority, and is able to use this to support specific aspects of the improvement work undertaken at da Vinci Community College.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derby City Council.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham
Her Majesty's Inspector