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Ms V Callaghan
Headteacher
Newland School for Girls
Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RU

Dear Ms Callaghan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newland School for Girls, City of Kingston upon Hull

Following my visit to your school on 13 March 2014, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- review the structure of the governing body, ensuring that all governors have clear roles and responsibilities in improving the school for which they are accountable; ensure that the performance of all subject areas is routinely challenged and that expertise within the governing body is assessed and then used to best effect
- review the structure of the enlarged leadership team to ensure that all have responsibilities and an impact on standards in line with their position, for which they are held to account
- accelerate improvements in mathematics by developing high quality leadership, an accurate analysis of the department's weaknesses through robust self-evaluation, consistently effective teaching, careful checking of pupils' understanding and more sharply focused assessment so that pupils of all abilities make progress

- accelerate the improvement of teaching and learning in general, including in English, by focusing monitoring on specific areas of weakness; hold teachers to account for the progress made by pupils of different abilities and those in receipt of the pupil premium
- further improve the use of pupil premium funding by sharply evaluating the impact of any spending and clearly reporting this on the website; ensure that one governor has responsibility for monitoring and reporting on this area
- forge secure links with appropriate partners and high quality schools

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and with other senior leaders. In addition, HMI met with the subject leaders for mathematics and observed parts of two mathematics lessons. HMI toured the school with senior staff and also met with a representative from the local authority. Two governors also attended the school to meet with HMI who looked at documentation including the school's updated action plan. HMI also met a group of students. Discussion with the new headteacher covered a range of issues including arrangements for the transition of the headship, the prospects for the school meeting its targets for 2014, and the investigation into pupils being entered for courses that do not qualify for inclusion in the 2014 performance tables.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit the school has returned to its own extended buildings having been temporarily located on another site. Two new senior leaders joined the school in September 2013 and the new headteacher started in January 2014. Minor changes have been made to the governing body and governors are considering options for becoming an academy.

Main findings

At the conclusion of the monitoring inspection, HMI shared the main findings of the visit with the headteacher, two governors and a representative of the local authority. Since the last visit by HMI, the senior leadership has been significantly refreshed and this is leading to improvement in a number of key areas although leaders recognise it may be 18 months before this is reflected in improved external outcomes. However HMI noted that progress is being made by the school in bringing about improvement in the following aspects of its work:

- pupils and staff are clear that behaviour has improved
- the senior leadership has been strengthened over the last six months by staff with additional professional skills and experience, providing a more secure and balanced team capable of sustaining a good school
- steps have been taken to improve the school's assessment and data systems so that there is a more accurate understanding of pupils' progress and teachers' performance. Leaders have rightly identified accuracy of internal

assessments as an issue of fundamental importance. However some staff with relevant duties were still not well-informed about last year's exam performance despite having access to all the relevant data

- professional development is now more accurately targeted on identified issues where specific improvements are needed, but there is more to be done in ensuring that key weaknesses within subject teaching are identified and resolved
- improvements have been made the use of pupil premium funds, and this is being monitored including through the 'attitudes to learning' group. A senior member of staff now manages this work to ensure a more strategic overview
- the curriculum is being extended with greater commitment towards the tutorial programme and extra-curricular opportunities
- some appropriate additional expertise has been added to the governing body but governors need to maintain a strategic overview

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has maintained links with a representative of the local authority, and an authority member of staff with relevant skills has joined the governing body. However there are now very few local schools that are still within the local authority and the authority's capacity in the area of secondary schools is limited; opportunities provided have not always been fully developed. More recently the school has taken some time for the school to build appropriate links with other schools such as local academies with strong results for pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding. As a result, the authority is trying to be helpful but is playing only a limited role in the school's improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for the City of Kingston upon Hull.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Gray
Her Majesty's Inspector