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Mr Ian Wingfield
Headteacher
Springwell Community College
Middlecroft Road
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Dear Mr Wingfield

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Springwell Community College

Following my visit to your school on 10 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 February 2014. 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:

- ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments and projections for students' progress across all subjects so that senior leaders and governors have a clear picture of current achievement in all year groups.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I visited a number of classes and spoke informally to some students. I

analysed information of students' current progress in English, mathematics and science, alongside records of leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching.

Context

A deputy headteacher has been appointed since the previous section 5 inspection and will take up post after Easter. A full review and restructure of the senior leadership team has also taken place.

Main findings

The headteacher has provided clear direction and has worked with senior leaders to update the school's improvement plan ensuring it takes full account of the areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection in February. The plan details appropriate actions and clearly indicates who will be responsible for driving improvement in given areas. Clear targets have been set and shared with all staff for the progress students should make in English, mathematics and science. These are appropriately challenging and reflect national expectations. This information has been used to identify additional interventions for individual students of all abilities in Key Stage 4, to ensure they make at least expected progress in these subjects. However, leaders are aware that some of the in-year information they receive from subject departments on the progress students are making is not as accurate as it should be. This is preventing leaders, including governors, from having a clear view of where they should target resources, and on whether gaps in achievement between groups of students are closing.

Leaders have secured an external review of the provision for students who are disabled or who have special educational needs. They have also established three working groups in school to focus on key aspects for improvement as outlined in the inspection report. For example, one of these has analysed provision across the school for less-able students. This has highlighted aspects of provision that the school needs to review further in order to build long-term improvements to the progress made by these students. The curriculum for these students in Years 10 and 11 has been adapted from next September in order to ensure they receive a more appropriate range of subjects and support for English and mathematics.

Leaders have shared the findings from these working groups with staff and have also provided appropriate professional development on areas that require further improvement, for example, on boys' achievement and on students' attitudes to learning. The school behaviour policy has been revisited with students and staff, and leaders are in the early stages of identifying potential refinements to this policy, with a focus on embedding a school-wide approach to behaviour for learning.

Governors understand the priorities for improvement well and have adapted their committee structure to ensure these are aligned to aspects for improvement highlighted at the inspection. The external review of governance was postponed, but

has been re-scheduled for the summer term. Governors have completed a skills audit and are in the process of identifying additional training and support they need in order to fulfil their role effectively. They have worked with the headteacher to ensure that clear career-stage expectations are built into teachers' appraisal targets for the next academic year.

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 local authority adviser knows the school well and provides direct support to the headteacher on a half-termly basis. He has supported leaders in establishing a link with another local school in order to share strategies for bringing about rapid improvement. The local authority is funding consultancy support into the mathematics and science departments. This is strengthening the capacity of these departments to identify improvements that are required to the curriculum as well as to teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector