

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



24 June 2014

Richard Stock
Westgate Academy
Westgate
Lincoln
LN1 3BQ

Dear Mr Stock

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Westgate Academy

Following my visit to your school on 23 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 April 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:

- strengthen the leadership of mathematics
- amend the academy improvement plan, so that it is smaller and more manageable, lists the individuals responsible for monitoring and evaluating actions, and states milestones for actions and success more clearly.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, and four representatives of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I conducted an interview with the academy's improvement adviser by telephone. I evaluated the academy improvement plan and I scrutinised the results of two pupil questionnaires on behaviour support. You took me on a tour of the school and we visited several classes.

Main findings

Immediately after your last inspection, you took steps to address inconsistencies in the feedback that teachers give to their pupils. All the academy's teachers visited an outstanding local school to see best practice in this area. Following staff training, you now insist that all teachers follow the academy's assessment policy. This policy now includes a requirement that extra challenges are set for pupils who are ready for them. Pupils are also given time to respond to their teachers' feedback at the beginning of lessons. These actions are having a positive impact and examples of outstanding marking were seen during this visit.

You have improved the systems that members of staff use to check on the achievement of pupils. In making judgements on achievement, progress has now become more significant than attainment. This helps teachers become more quickly aware of any underachievement. Your pupil progress meetings are now more regular and robust; teachers are now directed to produce action plans to address any underachievement seen.

A scrutiny of pupils' mathematics books showed that pupils are beginning to make better progress in this subject. One important factor in this is that the individual needs of pupils are being better met, particularly in Year 3 where pupils can choose to attempt 'bronze, silver or gold' level questions with extension challenges for the more-able. Teachers direct any pupils who attempt questions that are too easy for them to higher-level tasks.

Mathematical vocabulary now has a more prominent place in the academy, both through lessons and via 'Magic Maths' displays in every classroom. These displays list subject-specific words relating to the pupils' current mathematics tasks. As a consequence, pupils are now using mathematical vocabulary more regularly.

You are improving the behaviour of the small minority of pupils identified as a concern. Behaviour logs have been introduced into every classroom. These are then cross-referenced to help school leaders identify any patterns of poor behaviour, so that they can take appropriate action more quickly. Before your recent inspection, only those pupils at risk of exclusion had a detailed behaviour support plan. This has now been extended to other pupils who might benefit from more behaviour support. Displays celebrating positive behaviour are more prominent in the academy than at the time of your recent inspection. Pupils are increasingly appreciative of the support given to them, and most feel that their behaviour is improving as a result.

Senior leaders and those teachers responsible for subject areas are more accountable for the impact of their actions. These members of staff have to produce a written record on a weekly basis which details the actions they take and the impact of those actions. This is helping individual members of staff become more aware of their own role in school improvement.

Members of staff from your local teaching alliance schools have visited the academy to conduct learning walks with your teachers. This has helped identify further areas for development while confirming the progress that has been made in the time since your recent inspection.

Increasing the proportion of pupils who make expected progress and exceed expected progress in mathematics is the most significant area of development for the academy. Although there have been improvements made in this area, more progress is needed. In order to achieve this, it is important that the teacher with responsibility for this subject area is given sufficient time to have the desired impact through the sharing of best practice, and through helping to improve the quality of teaching.

Following your inspection, the chair of governors swiftly arranged an external review of governance. This took place on the evening of this inspection visit and, therefore, no impact can yet be judged. Governors have employed two consultants to help the school: firstly, an education consultant to support you in the development of the academy's improvement plans; secondly, an IT consultant who is improving the school's systems for tracking pupil progress. Early, positive impact can be seen in both instances.

Governors have formed a 'Monitoring Evaluation Team' with the specific aim of assessing the academy's progress against its new development plan. The chair and vice-chair of the governing body have arranged to visit two schools which were once judged to require improvement but are now at least good, in order to see how they made progress. As these visits have yet to take place, no impact can be judged.

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

A consultant has visited the academy twice since your recent inspection. He has had a positive impact on two specific areas: firstly, identifying actions and success criteria to include in your academy's development plan; secondly, by emphasising the importance of more regular updates on pupil progress, including the performance of groups of pupils as opposed to individuals.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector