

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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Mrs Elizabeth Dormor
Headteacher
Marshland High School
School Road
West Walton
Wisbech
PE14 7HA

Dear Mrs Dormor

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Marshland High School

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 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 June 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:

- incorporate the numeric targets for improvement you have set into your school improvement plan to illustrate clearly the rate of improvement made over time.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, three members of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans and a separate list of targets for improvement were evaluated. You shared with me the GCSE results achieved by students this year. An opportunity to walk the school with you enabled me to see students at work in lessons.

Context

Since the last inspection, ten teachers have left the school. All of them have been replaced with newly appointed staff.

Main findings

You have made a number of changes to raise achievement throughout the school. During training at the start of term a new set of core values were agreed by staff to raise the aspirations of students. Senior leaders' expectations of staff were reaffirmed. New rules are in place to ensure that all students wear the correct uniform, arrive to lessons with the right equipment and display positive attitudes towards their learning. All students now carry better quality personal diaries. Revised policies are in place to improve students' homework and the marking of their work.

Personal targets have been set for all students based on their starting points, and the GCSE grades they should achieve by the end of Year 11. Lesson planning has been strengthened to make tutorials more meaningful and in particular to promote students' literacy and numeracy skills. A programme of staff training and routine monitoring of teaching has been introduced to help newly appointed teachers to establish themselves quickly and to ensure that all staff raise their expectations and aspirations of students. This includes training to improve the effectiveness of middle leaders in raising achievement in their subjects.

This year's results show a decline in the percentage of Year 11 students attaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics, mainly because a large proportion of students attained a C grade in English and mathematics but did not attain similar grades in at least three other subjects.

Your improvement plan prioritises actions to improve this and resolve the main issues raised in the last inspection. The plan includes suitable actions and timescales and is colour-coded to illustrate the progress made in securing improvements. You have set numeric targets to check how well you are doing at key milestones, but these are listed separately which leads to a lack of clarity when using the plans to review the improvements made.

The Governing Body remains committed to improving the school. They recognise that they need to provide senior leaders with greater challenge if the school is to become good by the time of its next inspection. An external review of governance led by the local authority is planned for later this month. Safeguarding procedures remain secure.

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

You value the support provided by the local authority, particularly the dialogue with your challenge leader, the link brokered with a National Leader of Education and staff training to support teachers and subject leaders. You are part of the local authority's Norfolk Good to Great programme to aid school improvement and develop links with other local schools.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector