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Mr Mark Pollard
Headteacher
Bishop Perowne CofE College
Merriman's Hill Road
Worcester
WR3 8LE

Dear Mr Pollard

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bishop Perowne CofE College

Following my visit to your college on 21 May 2015, 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 college since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the college was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2015. 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 college should take further action to ensure:

- leaders evaluate the effectiveness and impact of activities funded by the pupil premium and share this information with governors
- action plans have specific and quantifiable milestones so that governors evaluating the plans can check in a timely manner whether the college is on track to achieve its targets.

Evidence

During the inspection meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, a group of students and three members of the governing body, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The college's action plan was evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised including the college's latest student achievement data, other action plans and information on attendance and exclusions.

Context

Since the last inspection the previous headteacher retired at Easter and a new head of department of mathematics was appointed from the start of the summer term. The Chair of the governing body has retired and the Vice Chair is acting as Chair until September 2015.

Main findings

You, your senior and middle leaders and governors have a realistic view of the college and know its strengths and weaknesses well. Leaders have responded promptly in its action planning to begin to address the issues identified from the inspection and this has been intensified since your appointment. Leaders are monitoring lessons and achievement data rigorously to identify areas for improvement.

All students spoken to say there had been improvements since the last inspection, particularly in marking and in the consistency with which staff apply the behaviour and attendance policies. Changes are being made to the curriculum to ensure it offers the right range of courses for its students whilst at the same time ensuring that it is raising achievement, particularly in core subjects.

According to the college's own predictions for 2015 the proportion of students currently in Year 11 on track to achieve five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is set to be well above that of the previous year's cohort. The attainment gap between disadvantaged students and other students nationally is also forecast to be narrower. In modern foreign languages students have made more rapid gains in their learning compared to this time last year.

Monitoring of teaching has been focussed on making sure teachers plan to provide a sufficient level of challenge for all groups of learners whatever their starting points so that they make enough progress in lessons. Leaders evaluate evidence from lesson observations alongside students' work and achievement data. According to the latest monitoring by leaders the majority of teaching is now good and none is inadequate. Students spoken to responded positively to those lessons where they were given the chance to make choices and express their creativity. They were less keen on those lessons which they said were too heavily directed by teachers or which required them to spend time copying work.

Students spoken to were unanimous that marking is now much better. As well as setting development points for improvement teachers now expect students to respond to marking and their responses are also checked. Almost all students confirmed with evidence from their books that teachers check their literacy and numeracy as well as the subject content of their work. Marking is carried out consistently and frequently so that students are given a clear indication of how to improve their work.

The college tracks the number of incidents of low level disruption in lessons by individual students but to date this is not collated in order to analyse wider trends and patterns. There has been a rapid fall in the number of fixed term exclusions since the Autumn term 2014 as behaviour has improved and alternatives to exclusion have been employed.

The rate of attendance has improved for all students. The college met a specific target ahead of schedule in May to raise attendance to 94% by July and it is well on track to close the gap with the national average by the end of 2015. The attendance of disadvantaged students has improved at a faster rate between February and May 2015 than that of other students in the college. Attendance in Year 9 is not yet improving quickly enough. The number of students identified as persistent absentees has also fallen as the college has worked closely with parents through letters, telephone calls, meetings, home visits and other intervention and support. Rewards for 100% attendance are popular with students who have also welcomed tougher sanctions for lateness and absence.

Governors have a wealth of educational experience and expertise which they are now using to greater effect in asking challenging questions of leaders. They are particularly effective in regularly checking the level of exclusions and attendance. Governors and leaders have not sufficiently evaluated the impact of different activities funded by the pupil premium to ensure they are effective in narrowing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students nationally. Not all of the college's action plans have sufficiently measurable milestones so that governors evaluating the policies can check regularly whether the college is on course to meet its targets.

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

External support

The local authority has arranged for support and challenge to be provided by a local Headteacher who is a national leader in education. Arrangements are in place for the college to carry out external reviews of governance and the pupil premium later this term.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the governing body and the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools