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17 February 2016

Ms Yasmin Maskatiya
Executive Principal
Chichester High School for Boys
Kingsham Road
Chichester
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Dear Ms Maskatiya

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chichester High School for Boys

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 2016, 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 July 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- all leaders prioritise their actions to address the areas for improvement more sharply and evaluate them fully
- accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 3, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, so that it matches the rate of pupils' progress during Key Stage 4.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative from The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT), a group of middle leaders and a group of pupils, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited several classrooms with you, where I talked to pupils and

looked at their work. I evaluated a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans.

Context

Since the last inspection, the Department for Education has agreed that the school will merge with Chichester High School for Girls in September 2016 to form a new school, to be called Chichester High School. As a result, it is planned that this school will close on 31 August 2016. The previous governing body was replaced by a new joint governing body for both academies, largely consisting of governors from Chichester High School for Girls, in September 2015. In addition, senior leaders and many middle leaders are currently shared between the two academies.

Eleven staff left the school in September 2015 and one left in December 2015. Five of these have not been replaced due to staff restructuring.

Main findings

You and your senior team are showing great determination and urgency. You have wasted no time in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection in preparation for the planned merger of the two schools at the end of this academic year. You have drawn up appropriate action plans and are carrying these out fastidiously. While leaders' actions are improving the school, some leaders are unclear which of these has the highest priority and how to check the effectiveness of their actions.

You have acted decisively to restructure the leadership of many subject areas, including English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. Building on the strongest practice in both academies, and appointing new staff where necessary, you have revitalised subject leadership. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning through their regular monitoring of teaching and the range of good-quality training that teachers now receive. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified, leaders devise individual training plans and offer effective support.

When planning lessons, teachers now make good use of performance information to check what pupils can already do and devise tasks that challenge pupils more. The school's new marking and feedback policy is beginning to have an impact. In classrooms, the atmosphere is calm, purposeful and productive; pupils are proud to explain their achievements and the progress they have made. The lessons we visited together demonstrated teachers' high expectations for all pupils and several examples of the most-able pupils being stretched to produce high-quality work.

As a result of stronger teaching, pupils are now making better progress in English, mathematics and in many other subjects. GCSE examination results improved in 2015, although gaps remained between the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in mathematics. New arrangements to bring forward mock

examinations in Year 11 have enabled teachers to offer a raft of bespoke interventions to raise pupils' attainment this year. Consequently, current progress information accurately predicts improved achievement for Year 11 pupils with reduced gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. In addition, retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 in the sixth form have improved as a result of improved teaching and higher attainment in GCSE and AS-level courses. Senior and middle leaders recognise the need to accelerate pupils' progress during Key Stage 3, especially for disadvantaged pupils, since pupils do not make the same rate of progress as they do during Key Stage 4.

You have ensured that behaviour is improving and attendance is above average. Positive relationships between pupils and teachers create a warm learning environment. Your 'Linc' inclusion unit, shared with Chichester High School for Girls, is having a significant impact in supporting improved achievement for pupils with special educational needs. In addition, staff in the unit have worked very effectively to improve pupils' resilience and attitudes towards learning. As a result, the number of incidents of poor behaviour during lessons and the number of fixed-term exclusions have both declined significantly. Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding no longer feature disproportionately in exclusion figures. While exclusions figures for pupils with special educational needs are still too high, these are falling due to leaders' effective interventions.

Governance is now strong. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. The chair of governors has a determined drive to improve teaching and learning and a clear vision of the improvements that will come about as the two schools merge. Other governors bring a wealth of skills and experience, enabling them to ask school leaders much more challenging questions than has been the case in the past. The addition of clearer targets in the school improvement plan would make it easier for governors to judge how successfully leaders are improving teaching and raising standards. In their first term the new governing body prioritised restructuring the leadership of the school. They have now arranged for an independent external review of the school's use of the pupil premium to take place in March 2016.

TKAT, the governing body and leaders have rightly taken the decision to delay the review of the governance recommended at the last inspection. The old governing body has been replaced and the school is due for closure in August. Governors have agreed that an external review of governance will take place after the new school opens in the next academic year.

External support

Leaders draw wisely on a range of support offered by TKAT, partnerships with other schools and training offered by the local authority. In particular, the support offered by TKAT through the merging of the two schools is significantly improving the capacity of senior and middle leadership and has successfully enabled teachers to

learn from best practice here and elsewhere. Without exception, the subject leaders that I met recognise the impact of this staff training and they understand the key role they have in improving standards in their subjects. This is having a notable impact on improving the quality of teaching.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector