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Mrs Rose Codling
Headteacher
Khalsa Secondary Academy
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Dear Mrs Codling

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Khalsa Secondary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 June 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- continue to improve teachers' questioning skills, to ensure that pupils' understanding is checked and developed effectively
- ensure that leaders' evaluations consider the impact teaching makes on pupils' progress and that feedback to teachers focuses on this.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. I visited a number of lessons, where I spoke with pupils about their learning. I reviewed school documentation, including the improvement plan and checks on pupils' progress. I looked at a selection of pupils' books from Years 7, 9 and 10. I checked aspects of safeguarding practice.

Context

Since the previous inspection, six teachers have joined the school and three teachers have left. A part-time executive headteacher and two assistant headteachers were appointed in September 2015. Two deputy safeguarding leaders have been appointed. The length of the school day has been shortened in response to parental feedback.

Main findings

You, the senior leadership team and governors have taken swift action and focused school staff on improving the quality of teaching. The school's improvement plan is sharply focused on the areas identified at the last inspection. The plan is the result of staff and governors working together effectively and demonstrates the shared drive and ambition for improvement. The actions that are planned and measures of success you have set are relevant and timely. Roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly outlined.

Systems for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are rigorous. Leaders show a secure understanding of the characteristics of teaching and learning needed to ensure that the school becomes good. You have effectively communicated high expectations for teaching and the 'non-negotiables' you want to see in lessons. As a result, teachers now plan lessons that are focused explicitly on what pupils should learn, and the development of subject-specific skills and knowledge. I saw clear evidence of staff explaining to pupils what success would look like and what they needed to do to reach the highest levels of achievement. Additionally, teachers are planning lessons more closely matched to a range of pupils' needs, including those of the most-able pupils, and a greater level of challenge is being presented to pupils. Several pupils who spoke to me had taken the opportunity to tackle more difficult work. While teachers' questioning skills have benefited from initial training, sometimes teachers do not use questions well enough to check and develop pupils' understanding.

Leaders are using a range of evidence effectively, for example from lesson observations and checks on pupils' books, to gain an accurate overview of the quality of teaching. Although teachers receive useful feedback about the strengths and areas for development in their practice, there is too little analysis of the impact of teaching on the progress pupils are making. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified, appropriate and bespoke professional support is given quickly. Importantly, leaders check that teaching improves as a result of the help they have

put in place. Staff use time for meetings and training effectively to try new approaches and to share existing good practice. Leaders have created a more open and collaborative culture, so staff are more confident to reflect on and develop their own practice with their colleagues.

Leaders across the school are checking pupils' progress carefully. Your revised approach to monitoring means that gaps in pupils' understanding are picked up quickly and pupils in danger of falling behind are given swift support to help them catch up. Staff have benefited from the opportunity to work alongside colleagues from other schools to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' work.

Pupils receive detailed and specific feedback about how well they are doing. Pupils draw on this guidance effectively to identify their next steps and improve future work.

The appointment of two deputy safeguarding leaders means that there is a greater capacity across the school to carry out work to protect pupils at risk of harm. Regular meetings of the safeguarding team mean that information is being shared and updated effectively. Additionally, documentation shows that detailed records are kept of the various actions taken by school staff to keep those pupils who are potentially more vulnerable safe. The internal safeguarding audit carried out by the executive headteacher means that you and governors have reviewed policies and practice comprehensively.

Governors have matched leaders' quick response to make necessary improvements. Their appointment of an executive headteacher and two assistant headteachers has helped to build leadership capacity across the school. Governors' consultation with parents and pupils means that they have a secure understanding of stakeholders' views. Governors use this information thoughtfully to make appropriate changes to the way the school operates. Governors continue to provide a suitable level of support and challenge, making sure that they have information well ahead of meetings so they can plan appropriate questions to ask of leaders.

External support

The school is drawing effectively on external support. Links with Guru Nanak Academy and Cranford Community College support the school's work to check teachers' assessments of pupils' work. Plans are in place to engage with improvement officers from Buckinghamshire local authority to carry out an external audit of safeguarding and provide specialist support to science and mathematics departments.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

Her Majesty's Inspector