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Mr Peter Beighton
Principal
Branston Community Academy
Station Road
Branston
Lincoln
LN4 1LH

Dear Mr Beighton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Branston Community Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 20 March 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your four Vice-Principals and a group of governors including the Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I visited some lessons and spoke with staff and students, particularly about teachers' marking and students' responses to it. The academy's improvement and development plans were evaluated and the implications of the review of the academy's use of the additional funding through the pupil premium were discussed. I scrutinised a range of documentation including information about students' current achievement.

Main findings

You are acting swiftly and decisively to address the areas for improvement set out at the previous inspection. You are ably supported by a strong leadership team. Together you are making sure that strong systems to track students' achievement are in place and that they are being used by staff to check the progress made by different groups of students. The academy is now able to provide robust information about the progress of students currently in the academy. You are expecting subject leaders to analyse students' progress in greater depth, focusing sharply on the progress of disadvantaged students who are being supported through the pupil premium funding. Leaders clearly understand that some of these students are also more able and are taking action to tackle current underachievement.

You have introduced a '5 minute class plan' which asks teachers to identify the different groups of students they teach and how teaching is adapted for their needs. You are following this initiative up by raising expectations about the quality of leaders' checks of learning. Leaders are making sure that, when they are in lessons, they are checking on how well the improved teachers' planning is contributing to learning. Your line-management meetings are holding subject leaders to account more for the progress of different groups of students than was the case at the last inspection.

Your academy improvement plan is suitable and addresses all of the issues from the last inspection. There are clear actions to improve the quality of leadership and management, teaching and the achievement of the academy's disadvantaged students who are being supported through the pupil premium funding. Your revised development plan includes specific milestones to check regularly how well actions are leading to improvement. Governors are taking action to address the recommendations made from the timely external review of the use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, there is a separate action plan and a key priority is to improve the quality of checks made by leaders and governors on these students' progress. You are suitably linking this action plan with the academy improvement plan so that there is a coherent approach to ensure successful implementation.

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

The academy is making good use of the resources offered by Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance. An example of the impact of the support is the improved frequency and quality of teachers' marking and students' responses to it. Governors' actions are swift to address the recommendations made by the external review of the use of the pupil premium funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire
- Local authority
- The Education Funding Agency
- Academies Advisers

