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Mr Andy Knowles
Headteacher
Tupton Hall School
Station New Road
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Chesterfield
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Dear Mr Knowles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tupton Hall School

Following my visit to your school on 30 June 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 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 March 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with yourself and your two deputy headteachers. I met with three members the governing body, including the Chair and a representative of the local authority. I also met with four subject leaders. I scrutinised students' work in English, mathematics and science. These meetings were held in order to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I visited a number of classrooms, spoke with students informally and looked at their work. I examined a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, analysis of your recent data and examples of performance management statements for staff. I checked the school's single central record.

Context

Since the previous inspection, two new support staff have been appointed including a business manager. School leaders have reorganised staffs' responsibilities within the well-being team.

Main findings

You and your leaders are highly ambitious. Your school improvement plan is detailed and incorporates all the areas for improvement identified by the recent section 5 inspection. There are clear milestones and you have allocated appropriate responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken.

Your predictions indicate that there should be improvements in the progress made by Year 11 students from their starting points in English, mathematics and science in 2015. Although improving, there are still some concerns about the achievement of some groups of students, especially boys. Those students known to be eligible for the pupil premium are predicted to be approximately half a GCSE grade behind their peers in both mathematics and English in 2015. School leaders now set highly aspirational targets to ensure that the most-able students are making the progress that they are capable of. This is starting to make a difference to the achievement of the most-able students in Year 10 and the younger year groups. Teachers' assessments are subject to rigorous external and internal checking.

The quality of teaching is improving. School leaders routinely monitor the quality of teaching taking into consideration a range of evidence, including the quality of marking, students' opinions, and lesson observations. Teachers' feedback and marking is improving but some variability remains. The school has introduced a new 'strive for 5' presentation policy. Most students' books are well presented but not all students use rulers to draw mathematical diagrams.

Since the previous inspection, school leaders have made amendments to the behaviour policy. Staff apply the policy more consistently and sanctions, for example, detentions, are applied more rigorously. The re-organisation of the well-being team has given staff a greater clarity about their roles. This has resulted in a far greater focus on students' specific learning needs and any barriers to attendance. Students' attendance is improving and moving closer to national averages. However, although reducing, the absence of disadvantaged students is still too high.

Subject leaders demonstrate an increasing sense of urgency and challenge. They value the introduction of 'data summits' to discuss students' progress with their line managers. Subject leaders have a far greater involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and assessment in their departments. Subject leaders take swift action to address inconsistencies in teachers' assessments. All teachers have relevant performance management targets including one related to the achievement of their students eligible for pupil premium funding. However, these targets are not always

sufficiently specific or measurable, to enable leaders to hold teachers fully to account.

School leaders have rightly taken a number of effective actions to engage further with parents. They recognise that the school's engagement with parents could be improved to ensure that parents are more fully involved in their child's learning and attendance.

Governors are highly committed and are becoming more effective in improving the school. They are clear about their responsibilities and are aware that students' progress needs to improve. Governors present high levels of challenge during their governing body meetings. The single central record contained several administrative errors that were rectified before the end of the inspection.

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

Leaders value the external support provided by the local authority adviser. She knows the school well and has targeted her support to the needs of the school. She has provided appropriate consultant support in English, mathematics and science. The school works effectively with the local teaching school, Shirebrook Academy, to help support the development of subject leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Julia Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector