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Ms Victoria Crosher
Principal
Casterton Business & Enterprise College
Ryhall Road
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Stamford
PE9 4AT

Dear Ms Crosher

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Casterton Business & Enterprise College

Following my visit to your academy on 17 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 school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 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, I met with you briefly and spent most of the day with the Principal Designate, as he has been taking the lead for improvements since last November. I also with met the Vice-Principal, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the leader for students' behaviour and safety, and two governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I spoke with a group of Year 11 students and visited some lessons with the Principal Designate. The academy's improvement plan was evaluated and the implications of the reviews of the academy's governance and the use of the additional funding through the pupil premium were discussed. I scrutinised a range of documentation including information about students' current achievement.

Context

You are due to retire on 27 March 2015. A Principal Designate was appointed from 1 November 2014. A new Vice-Principal has been appointed from the start of the summer term 2015.

Main findings

You, staff and governors are determined to secure a good standard of education for all students. The Principal Designate's ambition for the college is that there should be high expectations of all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. This ambition is shared by all and they are keen as he is that improvements happen quickly and are embedded over time.

Senior leaders have not held back since the last inspection. A key change, to track the progress of different groups of students, including disadvantaged students who are supported through the additional pupil premium funding, is leading to staff being held accountable for students' progress. Leaders' weekly meetings to discuss students' progress help identify those who are not on track to achieve the higher, aspirational targets set. Interventions to tackle literacy weaknesses are taking place and students I spoke with said that these are very helpful. Although there is some inconsistency in the way students respond to teachers' marking, staff are committed to making sure that this aspect of their work continues to improve. The Principal Designate has restructured the leadership team and this is resulting in a sharper focus on managing change effectively. For example, specific people are carrying out actions to help improve the achievement and attendance of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This is resulting in improved frequency and quality of communication with parents so that attendance is better for those students who had previously missed lessons.

Governors are taking action to address the recommendations made from the external reviews of governance and of the academy's use of the pupil premium. Four new governors have joined the governing body and all governors are due to be trained further in their understanding of students' performance data. A key change is in the detail of the data presented to governors by leaders. It is presented for different student groups and is enabling governors to ask more searching questions, such as, 'How is management going to ensure that the sub-groups of students, such as those supported with pupil premium funding, are given greater priority?' Senior leaders' responses to governors are based on first-hand evidence which is increasingly gathered by governors themselves, with a new determination and focus.

Leaders, assisted by governors, have drawn up a college improvement plan which addresses the improvement priorities set out in the last inspection. The actions identified in the improvement plan are suitable and the intended impact is measurable in terms of raising students' achievement. Reviews help to adjust actions, for example, increasing the proportion of disadvantaged students who

should be making better than expected progress in English and mathematics. However, the academy improvement plan is an extensive document that does not enable key people to check the impact of actions easily.

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

Academy leaders are working well with some other local academies, including one judged to be outstanding, for example, to help raise the quality of teaching and students' achievement in English. The local authority has enabled the college leaders to link with an external consultant who is supporting leaders to check the impact of actions taken to improve subject leadership. The impact of the external reviews of governance and use of the pupil premium are evident in the higher profile of these in the academy. Current tracking identifies an improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged students compared to last year.

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

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector