

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 September 2016

Ian Wingfield
Headteacher
Springwell Community College
Middlecroft Road
Staveley
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S43 3NQ

Dear Mr Wingfield

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Springwell Community College

Following my visit to your school on 13 September 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 April 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection, before the one that took place in April 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- develop a clearer strategy to improve outcomes for the most able pupils, across all subjects and years
- sharpen up the evaluation of the pupil premium spending so that strategies to improve outcomes for this group, especially the most able, are more effective

- develop a clear and consistent literacy strategy across the school and in all subjects, which goes beyond spelling and punctuation.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body, subject leaders and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated. I met with a group of pupils. I visited a number of classes with you and another senior leader.

Main findings

Leaders and managers have acted quickly to address the areas for improvement since the last inspection. Their plans focus on the key areas for improvement appropriately. You and senior leaders have rightly prioritised the improvement in the quality of teaching, especially the impact teaching has on the progress of groups of pupils, especially the disadvantaged and the most able. The monitoring schedule of the actions in the plan is suitably rigorous. Pupils' performance and teaching are monitored frequently and leaders are using the information from these activities to plan next steps for individual teachers and departments. Subject leaders are suitably held to account. They are improving their effectiveness through the training and development opportunities provided by you and the senior team. Some actions so far are already making a difference in the classroom. For example, there is a greater consistency in the application of some whole school policies and expectations, especially in relation to behaviour and marking. Assessment practices are improving; the current unvalidated information about pupils' examinations performance for 2016 suggests that the school's predictions are much closer to the actual results compared with previous years. Leaders understand the need to use performance and behaviour monitoring information carefully to establish more efficiently how to proceed with next steps. This involves, for example, analysing where and when off-task behaviour occurs the most.

The way you and other senior leaders evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding requires further refinement. As yet, leaders do not routinely scrutinise the effectiveness of all the strategies used and report this to governors. As a result, some ineffective approaches may be allowed to continue. The most able disadvantaged pupils are not identified as a group who may require different and specific intervention. The school's work with feeder primary schools to identify the needs of the disadvantaged, especially those who perhaps underachieved at key stage 2, is underdeveloped.

The school's plans rightly identify the most able pupils as a key focus group for teachers and subject leaders. Subject leaders report on their progress regularly and teachers are expected to plan their lessons to enable this group to reach their

potential. However, the school lacks a clear whole school strategy from Years 7 to 11, in all subjects, to enable these pupils to reach the higher grades at GCSE. Expectations of this group by teachers may continue to not be high enough and outcomes for this group are unlikely to improve quickly, unless leaders and teachers are clear about what the most able pupils can and should achieve within each subject and across the school.

You and senior leaders have identified that low levels of literacy are key barriers to the school achieving good outcomes for pupils. Leaders have made some inroads towards tackling weak literacy levels but these strategies are not as developed as they could be. The evaluation of catch-up funding is not as sharp as it could be; the school cannot be sure that pupils' specific weaknesses in literacy, prior to joining the school, have all been identified. Consequently, intervention strategies and the work to accelerate the progress of those who need to catch up are not precise and effective enough. Teachers' marking of literacy, which is a whole school policy, tends to focus on basic spelling and punctuation and not sufficiently on the wider skills of reading and writing across all subjects.

Governors have improved their effectiveness and provide strong challenge to school leaders. They have a keen understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and value advice and guidance. They play a key monitoring role on the school's action plan. They have rightly conducted a thorough review of the quality of the external support they have received to ensure it provides value for money. Governors understand the need to ensure that all policies and information required to be published on the website are checked more rigorously. Currently, published information pertaining to special educational needs, equal opportunities, child protection and pupil premium and catch-up funding does not fully comply with government statutory requirements.

The local authority continues to provide comprehensive support for the school. Advisers have been deployed appropriately to key subject areas. The local authority has brokered school-to-school support to further improve leadership, such as links with outstanding providers to support more effective use of the pupil premium funding. Representatives understand the need to guard against over-generous reviews of the school, which may not be helpful to the school's journey towards becoming a good school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly
Her Majesty's Inspector