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Ms Vivien Swaida
Principal
Weavers Academy
Brickhill Road
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Dear Ms Swaida

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weavers Academy

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 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 third 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, including those of the Creative Education Academies Trust, are continuing to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, in your capacity of principal, and with senior and middle leaders. I visited 13 different lessons and held discussions with three different pupil groups. I scrutinised a lot of different work done by pupils and talked to them about their learning, their safety, and their aspirations.

Main findings

The school continues to improve. Changes that had recently been initiated when I last visited in March have become part of everyday life at the school. These changes are making a very positive difference to both the culture of the school and the rates of learning and progress that pupils and sixth-form students are making. There is a real 'buzz' about the school; learners are enjoying their learning and teachers are enjoying the challenge of developing highly effective lessons and learning opportunities.

Pedagogy, the skill of teaching really well, lies at the heart of the leadership of the school. There is a culture of continuous improvement and shared purpose and determination among staff, pupils and students. Aspirations are high. Teachers know that their insights and opinions matter to senior leaders. Pupils and students know that the school is all about providing them with a great education. The principal models good practice in teaching, including learning with and from others. The leadership team is being adjusted from September to ensure that the team is even more sharply focused around improving the learning experience of pupils.

Pupils and sixth-form students talk about their learning with confidence and enthusiasm. They are ambitious. They know that the school is all about learning and that their work is important. Through the careful feedback that teachers give them, they are able to rectify misapprehension and further develop their ideas. They express genuine pride in their work which typically shows good or better progress. Particularly striking is the clarity with which teachers identify the next steps individual pupils need to make and offer the support to help the pupil move on. In telling me about the improvements in their school, pupils chose to identify teaching as the key area of improvement. Within that, they noted that teachers are much clearer about what they are expecting from the pupils, what the pupils are meant to be learning and what success will look like. They also explained that the school supports their development of literacy skills and vocabulary much better than it had in the past.

Systems are in place to ensure that pupils' and students' progress is tracked, and that teachers are properly held accountable for the extent to which they are enabling their charges to make progress. Those in need of support are identified quickly and helped along appropriately. The information gathered by the school indicates that pupils are making much better progress. Different groups of pupils, some of which typically have not done so well in the past, such as economically disadvantaged pupils, are catching up with their peers.

The information, advice and guidance given to pupils and students are helpful and appropriately reflect the wide range of qualification and career options open to them. However, there is need to improve the work experience offered to pupils in key stage 4.

The behaviour of pupils and students continues to support their learning. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and that they feel safe. They feel that teachers manage behaviour well.

External support

The multi-academy trust of which Weavers Academy is a part has put in place leaders with the vision, skills and dedication to help staff develop the understanding and skills needed to ensure improved outcomes for pupils and students. They have supported leaders to develop systems to hold individuals to account, to track the progress made and to ensure that the effectiveness of the support given to individuals is evaluated.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive officer of the Creative Education Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing
Her Majesty's Inspector