

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



16 December 2015

Mr Sam Griffin
Headteacher
St Ivo School
High Leys
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 6RR

Dear Mr Griffin

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St Ivo School

Following my visit to your academy on 1 December 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

I met with you and your team of senior leaders, a group of pupils and two members of the governing body. I also scrutinised a range of documents relating to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, you have taken up your substantive role as headteacher. There have been very few changes to staffing. The number of pupils on roll remains the same as last year. This year, 270 pupils throughout Years 7 to 13 are eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support those from disadvantaged backgrounds).

Last year, pupil premium funding made little difference to narrowing the gap in achievement. Some of the strategies used to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils did not work. Data show that their achievement remained lower than that of other pupils in the academy. By the end of Key Stage 4, gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils actually widened.

The impact of better teaching, promoted through regular monitoring, evaluation and training, is clearly shown in the academy's improved results this year. You have reaffirmed with teachers the importance of maintaining this so that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make the progress expected of them.

Despite this year's improved results, closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and others remains a pressing issue as the academy prepares for its reinspection in 2016. Rightly, you have made raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils the academy's top priority. You are continuing with strategies known to be making a difference in supporting disadvantaged pupils, and have introduced new ones to secure sustainable gains at a faster rate.

The strengths in the academy's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are that:

- your evaluation of what did and did not work well last year has informed your current plan for narrowing the gap in pupils' achievement by the end of Key Stage 4
- all teachers receive updates of pupils' most recent progress data, which highlights those who are not meeting the minimum target grades set for them, including disadvantaged pupils
- increasingly, all teachers are held accountable for raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The academy's appraisal procedures now include a target whereby all teaching staff select up to five disadvantaged pupils in their classes and identify key actions that they will take to accelerate their progress and raise their achievement
- pupils in Year 11 have mentors to oversee their progress and welfare, and to steer them towards extra teaching and revision classes, including an additional 'period 6' at the end of each day
- an additional hour of English and mathematics has been added to the curriculum for all pupils in Years 8 to 11. Each subject has an extra teacher to teach small groups of pupils and provide one-to-one support for them

- disadvantaged pupils who join the academy in Year 7 with low levels of literacy and numeracy receive intensive teaching and support together in the same small class, through the '7-Jump programme'. Pupils who were part of this last year spoke enthusiastically with me about the impact it has had on their learning, confidence and self-esteem. You are continuing with it this year and have extended it into Year 8 for those who need further support in acquiring basic skills.

The weaknesses in the academy's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are that:

- as the academy nears its reinspection in 2016, current performance data show that support for disadvantaged pupils has not worked well enough, and that these pupils continue to underachieve compared to others in the academy
- some new strategies, implemented this year to narrow gaps in achievement, are not yet sufficiently embedded to prove that they are leading to improvement
- some mentors and pastoral staff are not monitoring closely the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils, or following up their persistent absence with sufficient rigour. Records show that some are often absent from school
- the actions the academy is taking to ensure that disadvantaged learners in the sixth form achieve well are not as clear as for those in earlier key stages.

Priorities for further improvement

- Evaluate at regular intervals the impact of the actions you are taking to narrow the gaps in achievement and record this fully to illustrate the academy's effectiveness in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure that disadvantaged learners in the sixth form receive the support they need to reach the standards they should.

External support

You have spent your first term finding out the academy's strengths and weaknesses, and wasted no time in forging new relationships with local schools. You have visited all of the academy's primary partner schools to gain a full picture of pupils' learning prior to their arrival in Year 7, and to discuss how schools can work more collaboratively. You and your governors value the initial work developed through Ofsted's 'Triads' initiative, and are now seeking to forge a firm partnership with a local secondary school.

The academy continues to employ the services of an external consultant to support its monitoring and evaluation procedures.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector