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8 March 2013

Mr Roger Matthews
Headteacher
Portchester Community School
White Hart Lane
Fareham
PO16 9BD

Dear Mr Matthews

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Portchester Community School

Following my visit to your school on 8 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan and associated documents were evaluated.

Context

There have been no changes in the school's status or changes in key personnel since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The senior leadership team have revised the school action plan with a stronger emphasis on addressing the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. The goals and activities outlined within the plan, while suitable for improving the school, are not yet supported by a clear timeline with identifiable key steps along the way that lead to a realistic target date for completion. The plan does not make it clear how some of the intended actions will directly impact on improving standards and the progress students make, especially in English. While the person responsible for leading each action is identified in the plan, responsibilities for monitoring the plan's progress and impact are not clearly defined or timetabled. Staffing issues in English have been difficult to resolve and have affected the pace with which low outcomes improve.

The governors' general monitoring activities in the school give them a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body have responded positively to the outcomes from the inspection. They have formed a focused group of governors to take an initial lead in monitoring the schools' progress against the key issues from the inspection on behalf of the full governing body. However their work is hampered by the lack of clarity and focus in the school's action plan as this makes it difficult for them to maintain an overview of progress.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- refine action planning to prioritise the impact on improving students' progress and include a clear timetable showing key steps along way to becoming a good school
- help the governing body to monitor and check the school's progress more effectively against clearly defined and measurable activities in the action plan.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The headteacher is making good use of the support available from the local authority as well as from local schools, including a local 'teaching school'. The local authority has been active in encouraging these links. Regular monitoring by the local authority is helping the school to evaluate strengths and areas for development and to support planning for improvement. External consultants have begun to work with subject areas such as English to improve teaching and raise standards.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector