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24 April 2013

Mrs Brown
Emerson Valley School
Hodder Lane
Emerson valley
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK4 2JR

Dear Mrs Brown

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Emerson Valley School

Following my visit to your school on 24 April 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the school was inspected, a permanent teacher and two learning support assistants have been appointed and taken up post. Appropriate checks have been carried out to ensure they are suitable and qualified to work in schools. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up post in September 2013.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The senior leadership team knows where improvement is required and is committed to improving outcomes for pupils. The school improvement plan is detailed and picks

out the most important things that the school needs to do to improve. Actions are prioritised with appropriate timescales for completion, ensuring that they are spread throughout the year so that the school will not be overburdened at any one time. Overall, the school improvement plan provides a sound base for improvement. However, not all actions are linked to measurable and specific results, such as to pupils' progress. This could make it more difficult for the school to measure the progress it is making, as well as to understand which actions are having the most impact on pupils' progress.

School leaders have started to meet regularly with the local authority and members of the governing body to check progress on the school improvement plan. This process is helping to ensure that actions are completed, there is no slippage in timescales and plans can be adapted when appropriate. External support from the local authority and a neighbouring outstanding school has begun and is already having an impact, for example, on consistency and challenge in pupil progress meetings and in arrangements for performance management of teachers.

The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support to the school. Governors were involved in the development of the improvement plan and key members ensure the school is held to account for how well pupils are doing. They have restructured their committees to ensure a sharper focus on pupils' progress and are committed to supporting the headteacher in resolving the long-term staffing issues which have been a problem for the school.

The local authority's statement of action sets overall targets for improving achievement and teaching. It includes clear milestones, draws on a range of external support and priorities are logically sequenced. However, although the statement provides information about support for the new headteacher, it does not include action to support other new members of the senior or middle leadership teams.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Milton Keynes Local Authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Barkway
Additional inspector