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12 July 2013

Mr R Carlyle
Headteacher
Bridgemary School
Wych Lane
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Hants
PO13 0JN

Dear Mr Carlyle

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Bridgemary School

Following my visit to your academy on 12 July 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 academy's most recent section 5 inspection.

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

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body and a representative of the sponsor. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's action plans were evaluated. The headteacher accompanied the inspector on a tour of the academy. The academy's single central record, which contains checks on staff appointments, was also reviewed.

Context

Since the inspection, five members of the teaching staff have left the academy. Seven new teachers and two new teaching assistants have been appointed. A new director of learning for science has taken up his post. Senior leadership roles have been restructured, as has the line management of the services which provide support for students.

The quality of leadership and management at the academy

Since the inspection, the headteacher and the governing body have acted rapidly to address the issues which were highlighted in the report. The action plan, which the academy has drawn up, is clear and detailed and builds upon the work which the academy had already begun.

The academy is taking appropriate action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and increase the rate of students' progress. A detailed examination of students' work was undertaken to analyse how best to focus teachers on how to match work more closely to students' needs. Existing good practice within the academy has been shared more widely and extensive training has been provided, and supported by the sponsor. The academy has made appropriate use of human resource procedures to address inadequate teaching, and expectations about the quality of teaching and learning have been made very explicit. The way in which feedback is given to students has been refined. Teachers, in their planning, are now allowing more time to discuss work with students. A new initiative about homework is to be introduced in September.

A new director of learning has taken responsibility for the science department and new members of staff have been recruited. The curriculum has been extensively remodelled to allow for three discrete sciences to be taught. The knowledge and understanding which students gain in science is now being reinforced through some physical education (PE) lessons.

The academy has acted robustly to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Changes have been made to the way in which absence is managed through the restructuring of the line management of this area of work. As a result, persistent absence has halved since the inspection and attendance is beginning to improve.

The governing body are very actively involved in the academy. They take their responsibilities seriously and have produced their own action plan which dovetails with and complements the plans of the academy and sponsor. They have realigned their meetings to ensure they receive the most up-to-date reports from the academy on students' progress and have a very good understanding of what the information on students' progress is showing them. They are directly scrutinising the quality of students' work to ensure improvement is taking place. They receive regular progress reports and updates on the academy's action plans. They are holding the academy to account tightly for making improvements and are determined that it will improve rapidly.

The sponsor has provided strong support using experts from across The Kemnal Academy Trust to help improve the quality of teaching. Their action plan is sharp and well focused and indicates the short-term nature of the support provided. Their

Director of Intervention and Support has helped with training in the academy and their science expert has also been working in the academy. Their Director of Secondary Education has joined the academy's governing body. The relationships between the sponsor and academy are strong and harmonious.

The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have begun to take effective action to address the issues identified in the inspection in May. There are early signs that some of the work is beginning to have an effect. However, much remains to be done. There will be a considerable number of new staff in September who will require support and it is important that all staff apply policies and procedures consistently.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The academy's action plan is fit for purpose.

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire, the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education, and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marcia Headon
Additional Inspector