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16 July 2014

Mrs Margaret Bainbridge
Interim Headteacher
Weald Junior School
Robin Hood Drive
Harrow
HA3 7DH

Dear Mrs Bainbridge

Special measures monitoring inspection of Weald Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, who is the headteacher of Elmgrove Primary School and Nursery. I also met the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the literacy coordinator. I met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and two other members, and two representatives from the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. Additional documentation was scrutinised, including the vetting checks on new staff.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has left the school and you have been appointed as the interim headteacher. An executive headteacher, who is a local leader of education (LLE), is working with senior leaders during this term. Three teachers have left the school and their classes are being taught by supply teachers. You have also appointed an information, communications and technology coordinator during this term. Three new assistant headteacher posts have been created to lead the improvements in teaching and learning, inclusion and behaviour

management. The local authority is brokering the support of a local leader of education to work with the school from September 2014.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Following the recent inspection, senior leaders have worked closely with the governing body and the local authority to produce the school improvement plan. The plan is detailed and shows how you are addressing the areas identified for improvement. Each action is linked to short-, medium- and long-term milestones, which include realistic deadlines and measurable success criteria. You have also ensured that the plan is checked regularly by referring to the role that leaders and governors will play in keeping it under scrutiny. This is intended to support leaders and governors in judging the impact of the actions taken. However, the plan does not always include interim success criteria which can be used to assess the impact of the action taken at each milestone. The names or roles of those responsible for evaluating the impact of actions are not always clear.

The local authority's statement of action provides a clear rationale for supporting the school. The plan dovetails well with the school action plan. The local authority is providing a varied programme of support for teachers, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors. The support is drawn from links with local schools judged to be good or better, local authority officers and curriculum advisers. The planned support is strongly focused on building the capacity of the leadership team especially through the support of the executive headteacher. The local authority's statement of action includes reference to the termly raising improvement plan partnership meetings. This level of support is intended to hold you and other senior leaders to account for accelerating pupils' progress. Although the plan includes a good range of appropriate support for you and your staff, it lacks clarity in some areas. This is in relation to measurable success criteria and specific approaches to developing some areas of work. For example, there is insufficient detail on how specialist advisers of English will help teachers to improve pupils' writing, including their use of grammar, spelling and punctuation marks.

You and other senior leaders are working closely with the senior local authority officer to identify and broker support for the school. You were all very clear that the school is already benefiting from working closely with identified partner schools, including the local leader of education from Elmgrove Primary School. For example, you have indicated attendance is improving and it is higher than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' behaviour is much improved in lessons and around the school, and middle leaders are beginning to understand their roles. As a result of recent changes, you report that senior leaders are holding staff to account for their performance more effectively. These changes are contributing to the school moving forward. However, you and other senior leaders acknowledge that intensive support

is still required to improve teachers' classroom practice so that teaching is consistently good or better.

The review of governance and the use of the pupil premium funding have been undertaken. The recommendations of these reviews are included in the school improvement plan. At the time of this inspection, leaders and governors were in the process of writing separate action plans to address the recommendations in these reviews. As a result of the reviews, one of the new assistant headteachers has full responsibility for overseeing the work of the school's pupil premium coordinator and closely assessing the impact of the funding on pupils' learning. In addition, the Chair of the Governing Body, who was appointed just before the last inspection, is a national leader of governance. She has an acute awareness of what is to be done so that senior leaders can make the improvements required to remove the school from special measures as quickly as possible. To support this, she has established a new governors' group called the Junior School's Governing Body School Improvement Plan Working Group, which meets regularly to critically analyse, review and support the action taken by leaders.

Following the monitoring inspection, these judgements were made:

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley
Her Majesty's Inspector