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14 December 2012

Headteacher
Easebourne CofE Primary School
Easebourne Street
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West Sussex
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Dear Mr Bain

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Easebourne CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Friday 14 December 2012, 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, teachers, and a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. The school improvement plan was evaluated, recent progress reports by the local authority advisor reviewed, and information about the consortium of local schools looked at in detail. I also looked at schemes of work for Years 5 and 6.

Context

Since the last inspection, the committee structure of the governing body has been revised, to give a stronger focus on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Roles and responsibilities for the senior leadership team have been redefined to give them greater clarity and to establish clearer lines of accountability. Funding is now secure for the school's planned move to a larger site in September 2013.

Main findings

Governors have responded positively to the October inspection. They acknowledge that they had not previously taken enough notice of the limited progress made by some pupils, especially by the more able and by boys. They recognise that, in planning for the school's relocation, they had 'taken their eye off the teaching and learning ball'. Training is being put in place to help them question and analyse information about pupils' standards and progress. Relevant experience amongst current governors is now driving more rigorous challenge to complement their sturdy support for the school. It is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

The school's post-inspection improvement plan – put together largely by the deputy head, helped by the local authority advisor – is well-structured and practical. Key issues are broken down into manageable areas of responsibility, with dates set for meeting targets and clear explanations of how success will be measured and progress monitored. As head teacher, you have been much engaged in planning for the school's imminent move and you ensure that the school plays an important role in the locality consortium of sixteen primary schools and a secondary academy.

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

- strengthen the governing body's role as critical friend, with a particular focus on the quality and impact of teaching and learning
- establish a more strategic approach to planning at all levels of leadership and management, with the development of roles for middle leaders, releasing more time for reflection and challenge by senior leaders
- develop and embed consistency of good practice in teaching through
 - a shared understanding of what constitutes good or better teaching
 - more secure and accurate assessment of pupils' standards and progress, both in lessons and in the marking of work
 - constructive use, in planning lessons, of information about pupils' knowledge and skills, so that pupils of all abilities and learning styles are challenged and their progress accelerated.

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

External support

Regular monitoring by the local authority advisor is helping governors and senior leaders to evaluate strengths and areas for development and to plan effectively. She has also arranged consultancy - for example, to advise on analysis and use of information about pupils' progress. In addition, the school benefits from expertise and examples of good practice shared across the local consortium of schools, and through links with colleges, universities and providers of initial teacher training.

To strengthen the implementation of the school's action plan, the likely pattern of further Ofsted intervention will include:

- lesson observations and feedback to teachers
- contribution to staff training, with a particular focus on matching expectations and activities to pupils' differing abilities and ways of learning
- work with governors to ensure that they set challenging targets for senior leaders and teachers, based on accurate analysis of information about progress made by all pupils, including pupils eligible for additional government funding through the Pupil Premium.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham
Her Majesty's Inspector