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16 February 2013

Mr John McEachern
Headteacher
The Sanders Draper School and Specialist Science College
Suttons Lane
Hornchurch
Essex
RM12 6RT

Dear Mr McEachern

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Sanders Draper School and Specialist Science College

Following my visit to your school on 15 February 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair and members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school's action plan was evaluated.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

Main findings

Prior to the December 2012 inspection, the headteacher, governors and local authority were already addressing the weaknesses identified in the inspection report. Inspectors reported that 'the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is taking appropriate action to improve teaching and

raise standards across the school.' This work has continued since the inspection. The school's action plan is rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching. It has clear success criteria and realistic milestones. The improvement plan has been enhanced to focus more explicitly on the improvement points from the inspection report and specifically improving the pace of progress in lessons and the systematic monitoring of all aspects of the school's activity. The senior leadership structure of the school has been reviewed with a radical change in personnel, together with changes to middle leadership, both taking effect in April. This is aimed at strengthening leadership and management at all levels. There have been many activities aimed at improvement, including sharpening the link between lesson observations and professional development. The Governing Body is appropriately challenging and governors work well with senior leaders. Governors do not yet fully understand information about how the school is doing and in particular expectations of student progress. Training is taking place to help them.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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:

- continue to strengthen subject leaders' ability to improve teaching and learning through monitoring teachers' work
- make sure that teachers follow the agreed whole school set of principles for teaching contained in the action plan
- arrange an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved, (the school should contact the National College via governance.review@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk to request a review of governance).

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

External support

Prior to the recent inspection the local authority had been supporting the school as part of its 'gaining ground' programme to challenge schools which were not yet good. Departmental reviews have taken place. Since the inspection the local authority has nominated the school to the national college to work in partnership with a National Leader of Education in an outstanding school in a different London borough in addition to local support from a neighbouring successful school.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector