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28 February 2012

Mr Glyn Whiteford
The Headteacher
Denefield School
Long Lane
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RG31 6XY

Dear Mr Whiteford

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Denefield School

Following my visit to your school on 27 February 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The governing body's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

One teacher left the school at the end of the autumn term 2012. The school's head of science has now taken over the leadership of the mathematics department.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders and governors have fully accepted the inspection findings. They are ambitious for the school and are working hard to effect the necessary improvements.

The governing body is providing the school with effective challenge. Its members bring a range of skills and expertise. Governors have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A specific committee meets regularly to review the school's progress.

The school's action plan is appropriately succinct and covers the main improvement areas well. It shows exactly who is responsible for particular actions. The plan sets out expectations and targets for the end of each academic year, for example for students' achievement and the quality of teaching. However, there are not enough interim targets, for example to show how much teaching will be good by the end of this term. This makes it difficult for governors and leaders to check whether improvements are on track.

As Denefield is a convertor academy, it does not receive support from a sponsor or local authority. However, leaders and governors have commissioned a number of external consultants to work with the school. They provide a range of useful support and they help to monitor the school's progress, for example by observing lessons jointly with senior leaders.

Mathematics is a key area for improvement for the school. As it was proving extremely difficult to recruit an effective head of mathematics, the school sensibly sought a different solution, rearranging responsibilities to enable the former head of science to provide leadership for mathematics.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The governing body's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector