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Judith Lindfield
SW Surrey Short Stay School
Pewley Hill
Guildford
GU1 3SQ

Dear Ms Lindfield

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to SW Surrey Short Stay School

Following my visit to your school on 26TH March 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, a representative from the local authority and the acting chair of the management committee.

Context

Two members of the teaching staff are currently on long-term absence and as a result the school has had to make a change to the curriculum and offer a narrower range of subjects. As from 1 April 2013 the school will be maintained. A new management committee has been formed and is scheduled to meet for the first time in the summer term.

Main findings

The school's action plan is clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching and the setting of aspirational targets for students based on their academic ability. The headteacher regularly amends and updates the action plan as part of her monitoring schedule. The headteacher has now identified an appropriate method for setting learning targets, based on progression data and the range of diagnostic baseline assessments undertaken by students when they join the school as part of induction. There is increasing evidence that more teaching staff are setting learning targets for students and that some students know how to move up levels and grades. Teaching staff are developing a better understanding of their responsibility for improving students' academic progress in addition to supporting students' challenging behaviour and emotional needs. This work now needs to be embedded and tracked and evaluated across the school.

Additional actions to improve the school have been taken, including more rigorous tracking of attendance, reports for parents that are focused on progress and a sharper emphasis on sharing good practice in teaching and assessment for learning. The headteacher has made monitoring of day-to-day planning and delivery of teaching her top priority, which has resulted in more precise assessment in lessons and closer tracking of attendance. A partner deputy headteacher has observed lessons and established baseline standards for evaluating teaching across the school.

The school is in a transition period, moving to maintained status with control of its own budget and with a newly formed management committee. Staff absence has also had an impact upon the pace of improvement.

Senior leaders and members of the management have begun to take 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:

- strengthen and increase the capacity of the leadership team so that planned improvements to the quality of teaching can be sustained
- ensure that actions taken to check attendance and evaluate students' progress continue to be effective.

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

External support

The school benefits from support from the local authority for improving teaching. Local authority support is also in place to review and improve the quality of leadership at all levels, including that of the management committee. The local authority representative is working with the school to address the difficulties of its present location. As stated in the last inspection report, 'local authority officers are

aware of the limitations of the current building and are working to find a solution'. Relocation of the school or planned improvements to the current building have yet to be confirmed. The school will benefit greatly if this situation is resolved quickly.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce

Her Majesty's Inspector