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19 March 2013

Dr Alan Atkins
Headteacher
Caterham High School
Caterham Avenue
Ilford
IG5 0QW

Dear Dr Atkins

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Caterham High School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plans; governing body minutes; local authority notes of visit and other documentation relating to these plans. I also carried out a tour of the school with the headteacher.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staffing or the school's organisation since the inspection.

Main findings

Senior leaders have responded constructively to the recent section 5 inspection judgements. They have used written extracts from the inspection report and its recommendations to develop detailed action plans to tackle all areas of the school's work requiring improvement. Action plans have some measurable success criteria and timescales indicating when planned actions should be complete. The plans are focused around the four key judgements of the Ofsted inspection framework. Leaders and governors are aware of the challenges posed by the fact that these plans aim to tackle a large number of areas at once. However, there has already been some measurable impact. For example, actions taken to improve behaviour and safety, including sharpening the behaviour policy and setting up an internal exclusion room, have improved behaviour and significantly reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions.

The governing body is supportive of the school and receives regular progress reports from senior leaders. However, the volume of actions being taken simultaneously makes it difficult for governors to understand the overall rate of progress the school is making towards being good. Governors have no identified role in monitoring the progress of planned actions. The senior team have not yet clearly established with governors the specific areas of the school's work needing most improvement. For example, students' progress in Year 8 and 9 is behind where it should be and their achievement needs more attention than in other year groups. Governors are aware that they need to target, with school leaders, how long the school will take to be good and use this timeline to develop a strategic plan with measurable milestones to monitor the school's progress.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that the governing body has a clear understanding of the key areas of improvement needed to make the school good and how long these will take
- develop a strategic overview plan of the school's journey to good with regular, measurable progress checks to enable the governing body to monitor improvement.

External support

The school has been well supported by the local authority. The school has been partnered with a teaching school from within the authority and is also working with another school beyond the authority that has been successful in improving the achievement of White British boys. A local authority adviser is working with the school on a regular basis in the role of school improvement partner.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector