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18 June 2013

Ms Gina Wagland
Headteacher
Brantridge School
Staplefield Place
Haywards Heath
RH17 6EQ

Dear Ms Wagland

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brantridge School

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 to discuss the action taken since the last inspection with you, members of the governing body, the Chief Executive of the Grafham Grange Trust and an external consultant currently working with the school. I evaluated the action plan and also welcomed the opportunity to tour the school and visit some classes.

Context

There have been some changes to the senior leadership team and the staff since the recent section 5 inspection. The deputy headteacher has left and a new senior management post has been filled temporarily, prior to the school adopting a new structure for leadership. Two other teachers have left the school. The temporary Chief Executive of the Trust was appointed substantively in March 2013, and is now

working with Trustees and the Trust's schools to reconfigure leadership and management overall.

Main findings

Together with the Chief Executive, you have taken a clear lead in tackling areas for improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. While teaching is still not consistently good enough, your thorough review of teaching and learning has resulted in you taking some decisive actions to minimise the amount of inadequate teaching. You are using reviews of teachers' performance effectively to help them understand more clearly what is expected of them. The school holds increasingly accurate information on pupils' level of attainment on entry and evidence of progress being made by each pupil. As a result, more challenging targets for pupil progress are being set on an individual as well as a whole-school basis. However, not all teachers make enough use of this progress information to ensure lessons extend pupils' skills and knowledge well in every subject.

Governors have to date been insufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and are not yet providing a good level of challenge and support. However, members of the governing body are re-assessing their role with some vigour and an external review of governance has been carried out. Although there is still some way to go, all concerned now have a clearer view of the roles that different governors will need to take in helping the school to improve.

The school's action plan is understandably intended to address the areas identified for improvement as quickly as possible. However, some timescales for the completion of identified goals were over-ambitious and now need extending. As weaker leaders have left the school, stronger ones have not yet been appointed. Responsibility for the success of the action plan therefore rests too heavily with a few key personnel. The ability of the leadership team to achieve all goals is very dependent upon additional appointments being made in the near future.

Senior leaders, including the Chief Executive and the governing body, are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure the action plan includes achievable timescales
- extend and strengthen both the senior leadership team and amount of responsibility taken by the governing body in order to build capacity for continuing improvement.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is making good use of the support available from external consultancy. More work is rightly planned to help the school continue to improve the quality of teaching. A review of the role of therapists and training for learning support assistants is having a positive early impact upon the contribution they make to pupils' learning.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Executive of the Trust.

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter will be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Chief Executive of the Grafham Grange Trust