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20 June 2013

Mr R Barnes
Headteacher
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Lancashire
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Dear Mr Barnes

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Fleetwood High School

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, two governors, including the deputy Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. The inspector also briefly visited most classrooms in the school accompanied by the headteacher.

Context

Minor staffing changes have occurred since the inspection. An operational assistant headteacher has been appointed and funded by the local authority to work in the school until the end of the autumn term to develop improvements in behaviour. A temporary appointment has also been made to cover a maternity leave.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders and governors have responded quickly and decisively to the recommendations for improvement from the recent inspection. The school's action plan is

detailed and addresses each of the three main recommendations. Specific targets, success criteria, responsibilities and timelines to test how quickly improvements take place are clearly identified.

Weaknesses in provision in mathematics were acknowledged as an issue prior to the inspection and several recovery strategies were already in place. The inspection has accelerated this process. The actions are clearly focused and brokered support is being provided by an effective practice school. Senior leaders acknowledge that improvements are beginning to emerge but that there is not yet the consistently good mathematics teaching that is needed to remedy underachievement. A programme to improve teaching and learning across the school is also being established. This is linked to an appropriate professional development programme with weaker teachers being provided with a personalised package of support. Whole-school training has also been provided on questioning and is making sure that work set is more appropriate to the ability of the pupils and meets their individual needs better. Other improvements have focused on making more effective and less laboured starts to lessons.

The staffing structure is being reorganised to ensure greater accountability and enable monitoring procedures to be sharper. There is a stronger focus on early identification of underachievement and consistent approaches to improve teaching. School leaders are rolling out a wide range of strategic actions designed to raise student performance, improve the quality and impact of teaching and increase the effectiveness of leadership throughout the school. Data identify that there should be an improvement in examination results compared to the previous year. A common planning format, which is not over-bureaucratic, has been established to ensure consistency across the school. Behaviour, particularly in lessons has improved. A zero-tolerance policy is central to current practice. However, this has resulted in a high number of exclusions. Strategies to improve the quality and consistency of subject leaders will require further refinement. Currently, there is a strong focus on training subject leaders to monitor and analyse the work in their curriculum areas but less evidence is available to show how they will lead and develop each subject or improve specialist knowledge. The local authority intends to link each subject to an appropriate and effective practitioner in another school to support this initiative. This has currently been initiated in the core subjects where there is more readily available support, including consultants.

Managers will need to review the impact of each action to ensure that it is effective and still appropriate in the face of changing needs or circumstances. For example, the revision of schemes of work will need to be reviewed in the light of current national changes to ensure that revisions are relevant and of use in the future.

Governors are committed and ambitious for the school. However, they recognise that over time they have fallen short of holding school leaders sufficiently to account for students' slow progress. Since the appointment of the current headteacher a year ago, there is greater transparency and the governing body is more active in challenging the school and holding management to account. A recent external review of governance was commissioned and was positive about their role. High calibre foundation governors, including those with a good and recent knowledge of education, have been appointed. The committee structure has also been reviewed. An active self-review group has been established which meets regularly to consider agenda closely linked to the whole school evaluation cycle. This

enables greater challenge and accountability.

The local authority continues to provide and offer good support to the school. Currently, the support provided by consultants and by lead practitioners from the NLE partner school is benefiting and leading to improvements in mathematics provision. The coordination of local authority involvement is well-managed and regular monitoring and auditing of provision enables checks on the progress being made.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose but will need to be refined as developments arise.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose but will also need to be reviewed as circumstances change.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Interim Executive Director for Children & Young People for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow

Her Majesty's Inspector