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Mr Steve Cook
Headteacher
The Grange School and Sports College
Tower Road North
Bristol
BS30 8XQ

Dear Mr Cook

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Grange School and Sports College

Following my visit to your school on 18 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection I met with you for a tour of the school. I then met the other members of the senior leadership team to discuss the school's improvement plan. I met with the Chair of the Governing Body along with two other governors, groups of students, staff, representatives from the local authority and the Chief Executive of The Cabot Learning Federation. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan.

Context

The headteacher had announced his plans to retire before the inspection in April 2013. There have been a number of staff changes including staff leaving part-way through the term to take up new posts. The local authority has arranged for a member staff to work at the school to support the leadership of science. It has also arranged support for mathematics.

The local authority has also worked with the Cabot Learning Federation to support the leadership of the school from September 2013. The Federation will provide two Vice Principals who will each work three days a week, one as the Interim Principal and the other as an interim Vice Principal. For a further one day-a-week, the school will be supported by an existing Principal from another of the Federation's academies as Executive Principal. The chief executive will oversee this support. There will be additional support for the leadership of subjects and for improving the quality of teaching.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the governing body has not yet taken place but is planned for early in September 2013.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers have worked well as a senior leadership team and have made a good start to bring about the necessary improvements. They have used the local authority's plan of action to produce an improvement plan. This covers all the areas for improvement from the inspection report. It has clear success criteria, monitoring arrangements and milestones to check how well it is progressing. The plan identifies the key staff responsible for actions and these include subject and pastoral leaders as well as senior leaders and governors. However, the plan does not include a role for governors with the actions or how they will be part of the plan's evaluation.

Senior leaders have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and which staff are in need of support to ensure teaching is constantly good. They have identified what all staff need to do within lessons, and with the support of the local authority, have shared this with staff. Staff say they understand these expectations and feel that communication has improved within the school. Staff are aware of the increased expectations of their work. Senior leaders have identified good practitioners from within the school and trained these to be coaches for staff who require improvement. Students say that some lessons are more challenging but at times work is matched to the middle abilities within the class and does not challenge the most able.

Senior leaders have made a good start in overcoming the challenges within the school. There is a better understanding of what pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) funds are available and how these can be best used to close the achievement gap between eligible students and others. This includes how the impact of these funds will be evaluated.

The governors have received good support from the local authority. They now have a better understanding of their role to hold the school to account. This includes a better understanding of how to use progress information to check how well students are achieving. They also recognise they need to know the progress made by different groups to evaluate the quality of teaching over time and then linking this to the annual evaluation of the performance of staff.

The local authority has provided good support for the leadership of the school, across all levels, and for governors. They have liaised with other schools both within and outside of the local authority to ensure subject leadership is strengthened by identifying support for the leadership of science and mathematics.

They have also ensured the support for the leadership of the school through the Cabot Learning Federation.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence the school may not appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs) unless I approve the plans to support NQTs during their induction year.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive of the Cabot Learning Federation, the Director of Children's Services for South Gloucestershire and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector