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16 September 2013

Mr P Thomas
The Wey Valley School
Dorchester Road
Weymouth
Dorset
DT3 5AN

Dear Mr Thomas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Wey Valley School

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking incisive and urgent action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure improvement plans have clear measurable outcomes and milestones to check on the progress being achieved
- improve the practice and strategic leadership of English and mathematics by attending the 'Better English and mathematics' conference led by Ofsted
- link with a good or better school to observe their practice and to forge developmental working relationships between senior and middle leaders.

We agreed that I will return to the school to:

- conduct joint lesson observation with senior leaders to quality assure their judgements
- work with the new leader of mathematics and their team to develop their practice to raise achievement further.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and the governing body. I also held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner and conducted a learning walk of English, mathematics and science lessons. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since your section 5 inspection, there have been some changes to staffing and you have appointed some key staff including heads of department for English and mathematics. You have also implemented new line management arrangements for your senior leaders.

Main findings

You have changed the way you use data for target setting and in the planning of lessons. This had enabled more challenging targets to be set for students, which relate to levels of progress. These targets have been communicated with students and teachers to ensure that lesson objectives are used to inform students of the level of each section of work they complete. As a result, staff are setting work that is matched to students' abilities and provides an appropriate level of challenge.

You have implemented fortnightly 'performance and achievement' meetings where senior leaders hold heads of department to account for the achievement of students within their departments. This is enabling you to have a much clearer and accurate overview of standards and also for action and intervention to be timely and closely monitored.

The most effective teachers are now leading groups of teachers in a coaching model. Teachers are given opportunities to observe teachers in other departments, which is helping to share best practice more widely across the school..

The school development plan identifies key actions and procedures to bring about improvements; however, there is a need for milestones and outcomes to have clear, measurable targets. This will enable you and the governing body to monitor the progress that is being made and to act swiftly should any milestones indicate an area for improvement is not on track.

The most recent achievement data is showing a pleasing trend of improvement. English data indicates that most students are on track to make good progress. Mathematics results also show improvement, albeit not at the same rate as the English data. You rightly recognise that there is still more work to be done in this area.

External support

The school improvement partner has an accurate overview of the school. He is providing appropriate and timely support. We discussed linking you more formally to a good or better school so that you can observe their practice and forge developmental working relationships between staff at the different schools. I will endeavour to identify an appropriate school and broker their support for you. Your new leaders of English and mathematics would benefit from attending the Ofsted 'Better English and mathematics' conference to help them set a strategic direction for their departments.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Dorset and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
Her Majesty's Inspector