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Mr M Beard
The Interim Headteacher
Salfords Primary School
Copsleigh Avenue
Salfords
Redhill
RH1 5BQ

Dear Mr Beard

Special measures monitoring inspection of Salfords Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Thursday 9 October 2014, 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 June 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, middle leaders and a group of pupils. Together, we made short visits to some classrooms, during which we spoke to pupils and looked through some of their work. I also reviewed a range of documentation. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the leadership at the school. The previous interim headteacher has left and you started at the school in September. An experienced adviser, with expertise in Early Years Foundation Stage provision, is supporting the school for a day a week. The teaching team has also significantly changed, with 11 new teachers starting in September.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have brought purpose, energy and direction to the process of transforming the school. You are committed to bringing about necessary improvements. Your high expectations have been well received by staff and this has already led to morale improving and a much needed sense of togetherness amongst staff.

You have quite rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching first. You draw on your experience to good effect to improve practice. For example, you have already established a new appraisal policy, which staff have welcomed. You have also made effective use of extensive links that you have established locally to garner support for the work you are doing to improve teaching.

Simple, yet effective, strategies, such as brokering the services of specialist art, music and drama teachers, have broadened the curriculum for pupils. This has also enabled teachers to plan in teams under the direction of the 'Teaching and Learning Lead' roles which you have introduced. You rightly intend to strengthen the impact of these initiatives further by developing leadership skills in others and monitoring carefully how they improve teaching practice. The timetable for monitoring teaching that you have developed appears well organised to support this.

Beyond the direction and rigour that you provide, however, leadership within the school remains fragile. Middle and senior leaders are either very new to the school or lack the experience needed. There also remains uncertainty over the long term substantive leadership at the school. Plans to secure leadership must be developed as a matter of urgency.

The school improvement plan is appropriately focused on the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. It does not, however, have enough operational detail to demonstrate precisely what actions will be taken, by whom and when, and is therefore insufficient. This level of detail is essential to ensure that leaders at all levels are clear about the actions they need to take to improve outcomes for pupils. It is also important that governors have coherent documents from which they can monitor the progress the school is making. The plan also lacks precision about what tailored support is being put in place for the specific needs of the teachers who now work at the school. I look forward to seeing how this is developed at my next visit.

Due to recent staff changes, the impact of leaders' work on the quality of teaching is limited. During our short visits to classrooms there was, nevertheless, evidence that the improved marking policy is beginning to be applied. The quality of teaching, as we agreed, still varies widely across the school.

Pupils have already noticed many differences in the school since you started. They believe that behaviour is already beginning to improve. They appreciate the work

you have started to improve the general environment at the school. One pupil commented that their work is now displayed with greater care and this makes them feel more valued. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the specialist teaching you have introduced.

The governing body is effectively led by the Chair. The reconstitution, that had only just taken place at the time of the last inspection, is now bearing fruit. A 'strategic group' meets fortnightly to monitor the work of leaders; just one example of how the members are now more effectively supporting and challenging the school. The review of governance is yet to take place.

The statement of action written by the local authority is a strong document. It provides a clear overview of the work that will be undertaken to support the school in tackling its areas of weakness. It also provides a strong steer to you and your team about the types of activity that will bring about sustainable improvement.

You are making much better use of local authority support than was previously the case. Leaders in the past did not always follow up or act on the advice that was given by consultants. There are now signs that the support given by the local authority is having a better impact. For example, its work with you to establish accurate baseline assessments for pupils at the beginning of this year has ensured you can reliably measure the impact of your work by the progress pupils make.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher in Key Stage 2 before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Seconded Inspector