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Mr David Barton
Headteacher
Budehaven Community School
Valley Road
Bude
Cornwall, EX23 8DQ

Dear Mr Barton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Budehaven Community School

Following my visit to your school on 24 April 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure middle leaders significantly raise their expectations of the quality of students' work and of teachers' marking and feedback within their departments
- increase the rigour with which middle leaders monitor their departments to hold teachers fully to account for students' achievement
- refine action plans so that they include regular, measurable targets against which leaders, including governors, can monitor the school's progress more closely.

Evidence

During the inspection, I meet with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the

action taken since the last inspection. I conducted short visits to lessons to determine the standard of students' work and the quality of teachers' marking and feedback. The school improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the Ofsted inspection, a second deputy headteacher has been appointed to oversee the Ofsted action plans and to implement processes to monitor the impact of these actions. A re-structuring of senior leadership will take effect from September 2015. This re-structuring includes the appointment of directors of English and mathematics.

Main findings

Senior leaders have, rightly, implemented plans and processes which require middle leaders to monitor their departments more rigorously and to routinely hold teachers to account for the progress students make. Middle leaders are now required to regularly scrutinise the quality of work in students' books and the quality of teachers' feedback and marking to ensure it is in line with the school policy. Although middle leaders are carrying out these monitoring activities, their expectations are too low. They are not holding teachers fully to account or demanding high enough standards. As a result, the quality of work, marking and feedback in students' books have not improved enough since the inspection.

Too many books show that students are not making enough progress over time. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Too often the work in books is limited in amount and the work students complete is not always challenging enough. Too many teachers do not follow the school's feedback and marking policy. Students' books are not regularly marked, students do not receive clear advice on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. Sometimes, no evidence of any marking exists.

In some areas, particularly English and business studies, the work in students' books and the quality of feedback provided by teachers is of a high quality. Students in these classes are able to explain what level they are working at and have a deep understanding of how they can reach the next level. The work in books is substantial and show that students are making at least good progress.

Senior leaders and governors have implemented improvement plans with clear actions and a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching across the school. However, some actions do not always have clear and regular measurable targets so that leaders can closely monitor the progress the school is making. For example, the targets set for disadvantaged students' achievement is about them catching up with other students instead of them making demonstrably good progress themselves.

Senior leaders have implemented a more intensive support programme for underperforming teachers. It is too early, though, to judge the impact this is having. A programme of training for all teachers is being implemented in the summer term. This programme is designed to make better use of partner schools to enable teachers to be more reflective on their own practice. This is a step in the right direction.

Senior leaders predict an improvement on the outcomes for Year 11 students this year in some subjects but, notably, not in mathematics. Students' progress in mathematics is not showing enough improvement and some students are at risk of underachieving. This underachievement is evident from the poor quality of work in some students' books.

Senior leaders and governors communicate a clear passion and determination to ensure that the school improves. Leaders acknowledge that standards at the school have declined in the past and are fully accepting of the need to make urgent improvements. Governors have implemented a 'Governors' Challenge Group' to enable them to monitor the school's progress more closely. This group will meet more regularly to scrutinise the school's progress towards meeting its targets and to hold leaders more fully to account for the quality of education provided by the school.

I will make another visit to the school in the autumn term to scrutinise students' books alongside senior and middle leaders to determine if there are significant improvements in the quality. I will also evaluate the impact of leaders' actions.

External support

The school is accessing significant support from other schools and the local authority. Senior leaders have begun to conduct monitoring visits to other schools to develop their understanding of what constitutes effective education. The local authority has increased its support to the school since the inspection. Local authority officers are in agreement with the outcomes of this monitoring visit and plan to conduct their own review of the school shortly. The school has appointed a school improvement partner to ensure that aspects of the school's work is regularly scrutinised externally and clear targets are put in place between visits to speed up the progress the school is making to becoming a good school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
Her Majesty's Inspector