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Mrs Barbara Capper
Headteacher
Westcliff School
First Avenue
Dawlish
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Dear Mrs Capper

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Westcliff School

Following my visit to your school on 19 May, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. *At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.*

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

- resolve the uncertainty around its future status
- ensure that the school action plan identifies specific monitoring roles and timescales so that leaders and governors can check the actions taken are raising standards
- ensure the school's monitoring activities focus on the learning and progress of pupils and groups of pupils
- improve the learning environment in the early years classrooms.

Evidence

During the half-day inspection, I held meetings with you and spoke with a governor by telephone. I evaluated the school's action plans and scrutinised a range of documents including the school's monitoring records and pupils' progress tracking information. I undertook a focused tour of the school with you, to evaluate learning in the classrooms and looked at pupils' writing and mathematics in books.

Context

There have been no changes to staffing since the previous monitoring inspection. The governing body, together with the local authority, is currently in discussion with potential sponsors for the school to become a sponsored academy.

Main findings

Since the last monitoring inspection, actions taken by leaders have not had sufficient impact in driving improvement quickly enough. Although the headteacher demonstrates a commitment to improve the school, uncertainty relating to academy conversion and the inexperience of the governing body has hindered the impact of planned improvements. Predicted outcomes for assessments in Year 2 and Year 6 show that attainment and progress in writing and mathematics are likely to be below national averages. Attainment and progress, particularly of boys and disadvantaged pupils continue to be very weak.

You continue to focus on improving the quality of writing. The English subject leader is taking a more active role in monitoring this subject across the school. However, pupils' books show too much variation in quality across year groups. You agree that you and other leaders need to monitor pupils' work more thoroughly and drive improvement much more rapidly.

The school development plan links directly to the areas identified in the inspection report. However, monitoring roles and timescales are not always closely linked to specific actions. Leaders and governors in particular, do not systematically check the impact of actions taken or that improvement is happening quickly enough. As a result, the school is not demonstrating the capacity to be at least good at its next inspection.

The governing body has now undertaken a governance review. This is giving governors a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. New governors with appropriate skills are driving improvement at a faster rate. However, others still

lack a detailed understanding of the achievement and progress of pupils, and in particular, groups of pupils. This prevents them from asking the challenging questions needed to hold leaders to account more effectively. The governing body has not yet made a decision about academy conversion. This is holding back the pace of change at the school, taking time and energy from school improvement activity.

The learning environment in early years remains untidy and of poor quality. This limits the effectiveness of the provision. You agree with this evaluation and that improvement has been too slow. You have plans in place to fundamentally improve this provision in September.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided appropriate support through the targeted intervention and support programme. As a result, they are providing greater challenge to improve the school more rapidly. The local authority has also supported the school in deciding on their chosen academy sponsor. However, the governing body has yet to take this important decision.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Leahy

Her Majesty's Inspector