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15 June 2015

Mrs B Elkins  
Executive Headteacher  
Fort Hill Community School  
Kenilworth Road  
Basingstoke  
RG23 8JQ

Dear Mrs Elkins

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fort Hill Community School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 June 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 February 2015. 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Make sure the school action plan is a sharp tool for evaluating the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the school. Define the starting point for each action and the improved practice required as a result by key points in the future.
- Ensure that the governing body hold leaders firmly to account for bringing rapid improvements to the school.
- Ensure that leaders' checks on the quality of teaching always consider whether suitable levels of challenge are set for students of varying abilities.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, your senior leadership team, three governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I scrutinised documents, including the school's action plans and information about students' progress. I briefly visited lessons with the head of school.

## **Context**

The heads of science and mathematics are leaving at the end of term. Their positions have been filled for the autumn term. You are in the process of recruiting an English teacher, a music teacher and a physical education teacher.

## **Main findings**

You are building wisely on the successful approaches reported at the previous inspection. Leaders now regularly look at students' work to check the impact of teachers' marking and students' progress. During weekly visits to lessons, senior leaders now consider how well teachers are promoting good writing skills. Subject leaders have increased responsibility to undertake regular checks on the quality of teaching in their subjects. This includes frequent visits to lessons and checks of students' work. All subject leaders are required to report their findings at regular meetings with their line manager and discuss next steps. The new way you present information about students' achievement is easy to understand. Leaders can see at a glance how well different groups of students are achieving in different year groups, subjects and classes. Leaders are better placed to identify and address weaker teaching and achievement. However, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching do not routinely consider if suitable levels of challenge are provided for students of different abilities.

Teachers receive suitable training and support to improve. All staff have recently received training on promoting good writing. Your teaching and learning coach runs a weekly drop-in session where teachers can find out about and share good practice. He also provides useful support for those teachers who need to improve the most.

Actions taken to improve attendance prior to the last inspection are proving increasingly effective. Additionally, a new attendance tracking sheet makes it easier for leaders to see the impact of support provided for students and work with parents. Senior and middle leaders adjust their approach when required. As a result, students' attendance is improving quickly.

The new governing body has undergone a skills analysis which confirms that its members possess the necessary skills. However, they are not holding you sufficiently to account. They have not yet discussed or reviewed the effectiveness of your post-inspection action plan. The plan itself does not leave governors well-placed to gauge

the success of leaders' actions to improve the school. The plan does not identify the starting point for each planned action or the improved practice each action will bring over time. On a more positive note, the Chair of Governors is now taking responsibility for ensuring leaders use pupil premium funding effectively. An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding is scheduled for 23 June. Governors and senior leaders should take full account of its findings and adjust current plans as necessary.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide valued support. A local authority officer is scheduled to carry out a full review of teaching and achievement next week. They will then work with you to plan the exact support needed for the next year. This will include considerable support from subject specialists. You have successfully forged links with a local teaching alliance. English, maths and science teachers now have opportunities to learn from good practice in other schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**