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13 July 2018

Miss Pamela Ridgwell  
Headteacher  
Littlegreen School, Compton  
Compton  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO18 9NW

Dear Miss Ridgwell

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Littlegreen School, Compton**

Following my visit to your school with Barney Geen, Ofsted Inspector, on 3 and 4 July 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and groups of teachers and teaching assistants. I met with three members of the interim executive board and held a further telephone conversation with the chair of the board. I spoke to two representatives of the local authority by telephone. We observed learning in all key stages, including in the 'station' and at the college hub. We talked to pupils formally, and informally in lessons and around the school. We looked at a sample of pupils' work over time with senior leaders. An inspector spoke to some parents by telephone. A wide range of documents, including the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan, were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been replaced by an interim executive board. A small number of staff have left the school and new staff have joined. The local authority put an executive headteacher in place in January 2018,

but this arrangement came to an end in April 2018. The deputy headteacher is currently absent.

The school's residential provision has remained closed. An academy order has been issued, with the Solent Academies Trust as the proposed sponsor.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Leaders, including you, who joined the school as headteacher in September 2017, were not surprised by the outcome of the previous inspection in November 2017. You confirm that the 'unruly and unsafe' behaviour described in the report was typical at that time.

You have led decisive action since your appointment, and more rapidly since the inspection, to improve safeguarding arrangements and pupils' behaviour. Staff now fully understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that they all have a part to play in managing poor and dangerous behaviour effectively. Staff feel well supported by leaders to do this. Pupils and parents who spoke to us confirmed the improvements in behaviour seen during this visit. Pupils told us they now feel safer at school. One pupil said, 'Because of this new headteacher thing, it is really improving.' While another commented: 'This new headteacher goes to arguments and problems and saves the day!'

Expectations for pupils' behaviour in the school have risen and a clear policy is now in place to deal consistently with behaviour incidents. As a result, during the autumn and spring terms, the number of recorded incidents rose, as did the number of times physical intervention was needed. This has now improved, and while there will always be incidents to deal with, staff and pupils agree that these are now less frequent. Leaders now need to focus on addressing teachers' concerns about the lower-level disruption that occurs in some classes.

Leaders' higher expectations for behaviour led to an increase in the number of exclusions earlier this year. While this number is now reducing, the overall level of exclusion is still too high. This demonstrates that the school and its curriculum is not able to fully meet the needs of some of the pupils placed in the school. Furthermore, too many pupils on roll are on part-time timetables or are not currently attending the school. There are no secure plans between the school, the local authority and families to get these pupils back into full-time education quickly.

With the support of the local authority and advice from the police, significant improvements have been made to the school's premises and grounds to make them safer. There are well-thought-out procedures in place should a pupil ever try to leave the school's site. In addition to the initial visit from the local authority's safeguarding lead soon after the previous inspection, the school has also commissioned its own independent safeguarding review. The vast majority of the recommendations from this have been followed up promptly. The chair of the

interim executive board has also completed a thorough audit of safeguarding and health and safety procedures.

The relocation of the 'station' has improved the effectiveness of the facility. Pupils use the area to access support, guidance and respite at breaktimes and during lessons. 'Station' staff provide effective support and care but maintain high expectations about work being completed by pupils and behaviour being acceptable. The 'station' is particularly well used by children looked after by the local authority. Recently, leaders have strengthened links with some care providers for these pupils.

Your school improvement planning is detailed and focused on the right things. There are well-thought-out actions to be taken, with agreed milestones to measure the success. Key members of staff are allocated to lead each activity and it is very clear how improvements will be evaluated.

Soon after the previous inspection, most of the governing body resigned. A new chair was appointed by the local authority who remained in post when the governing body was replaced by an interim executive board in March 2018. As a result of this change, the recommended review of governance has not taken place.

The members of the interim executive board have relevant skills and experience to lead the improvements necessary. However, they are only just starting to focus on the quality of education and outcomes for pupils because their priorities have been safeguarding, staffing and financial structures, and academisation.

The quality of teaching throughout the school remains inconsistent. Where teaching is effective, pupils sustain their attention and develop their skills in subjects such as English, and make stronger progress. Some teachers have strong subject knowledge and enthuse pupils. For example, in science pupils found out what happens when highly reactive metals are placed in water.

At the Littlegreen Hub in Chichester College, learning is personalised. Pupils make good progress because they are interested in the courses they follow. Hub staff are very interested in pupils' wider well-being and show real care. Changes made by leaders to the organisation of key stage 2 classes have ensured that there is a greater focus on learning. Here teachers and teaching assistants work together well to help pupils to make progress. Even where the teaching is strongest, leaders recognise that pupils could be challenged to achieve even more. Where teaching is weaker, pupils frequently 'opt out' of lessons to visit the 'station' because it is more appealing. The school's assessment information and pupils' books show that key stage 3 pupils make slower progress in mathematics because there are too few opportunities for them to problem-solve and reason mathematically.

The pupil premium review was commissioned in liaison with the local authority. The reviewer made 29 recommendations. However, leaders have rightly ignored the many recommendations that would not help improve outcomes for disadvantaged

pupils. A member of the interim executive board has been given responsibility for overseeing the use of pupil premium funding. Leaders have worked with colleagues from the Solent Academies Trust to ensure that the published pupil premium strategy meets statutory requirements. In key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils are making faster progress than their peers, which is helping them to catch up. This is not the case in key stage 3, where gaps in attainment are not closing. The school's assessment information shows that children looked after by the local authority are underachieving.

Leaders have made concerted efforts to broaden the curriculum, for example by including religious education. Plans to introduce additional qualifications, including in the arts and horticulture, from September are well developed and will bring wider opportunities for boys. Leaders were aware that they were not doing enough to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. A multitude of initiatives have taken place to give pupils a wide variety of experiences. For example, pupils have taken part in a Windrush project, and met with police and a Member of Parliament. Pupils have taken on roles around the school, for example as members of the communication or digital teams. While there is significant evidence of improvements in pupils' social and emotional learning, they are not yet able to demonstrate an independent understanding of values such as tolerance, the rule of law, democracy and individual liberty through their own words and actions. For example, younger pupils do not yet understand the difference between bullying and unkind behaviour.

A recent school survey showed that most parents are happier with the school's provision for their children when compared to the time of the previous inspection. Regular newsletters, social media feeds, telephone calls and parents' meetings with the interim executive board have strengthened relationships between home and school. As a result, more parents have become involved in the school's recent events, such as the day to improve the school's grounds and a sponsored walk.

The local authority, the interim executive board and senior leaders have been distracted by concerns about organisational arrangements as the school moves towards academisation. Consequently, they have not worked together well enough or given all of their time and energy to improving outcomes for pupils.

The local authority's support around health and safety has been extensive and helpful. As result, many risks to pupils have been reduced or eradicated. The local authority's advisors visit the school regularly to evaluate the improvements being made. The local authority helpfully appointed an interim chair of governors and subsequently an interim executive board. The appointment of an executive headteacher did not have the impact that the local authority had hoped for. This is because there was a lack of clarity about the role and how it related to the work of the headteacher.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**