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Mr D Swift
Headteacher
Brewood CofE (C) Middle School
School Road
Brewood
Stafford
ST19 9DS

Dear Mr Swift

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brewood CofE (C) Middle School

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 2014, 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 September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the head teacher, other senior leaders, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Some lessons were visited with you and your deputy head teacher and some pupil work scrutinised. Minutes of Governing body meetings and external reports from consultants were reviewed.

Main findings

School governors, and senior leaders, have worked in consultation with the local authority to produce a school development plan containing pertinent actions to further raise attainment and improve pupil progress. This plan includes some pupil performance milestones, although more could be included beyond the headline proportions of pupils meeting expected standards. For example, effective action is being taken to improve pupils' writing skills by increasing their opportunities to write across all subjects. That was evident in pupils' recent work, with the relative increase in volume and quality forming a measurable outcome that would help inform progress on this issue. Staff now report pupil progress consistently and more frequently, allowing quicker responses to any shortfalls. Marking practice is also more consistently effective. The next revision of the school development plan would benefit from a clear set of a few well-publicised whole school priorities, derived from accurate self-evaluation. It should identify how to improve teaching, behaviour and achievement from good to outstanding. Further revision to the current plan risks becoming an end in itself, not the means to better pupil outcomes.

Governors confidently articulate their vision for the characteristics and outcomes they want to develop in the pupils of the school. These include high achievement, personal development that reflects the school's Church foundations and pupils 'who know how to be good students' at the next stage. It would be helpful to reiterate this vision as part of school development planning documentation. The external review of governance identified administrative and procedural improvements. Governors' minutes are now detailed verbatim records, which show good questioning of school leaders by governors. The minutes would be further improved if a succinct summary of the conclusion of discussion by the chair was recorded.

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 good support, through direct consultation to senior staff and governors, and an effective network of school-to-school links with the local pyramid of first, middle and high schools. This is much appreciated by staff and is ensuring very secure agreement about pupil standards on entry to, and exit from this school. Specific training and development for middle leaders is leading to, for example, a deep understanding of progression and fluency in mathematics, leading to some high attainment in Year 8.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese