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Maddie Oldershaw
Headteacher
Pear Tree Community Junior School
Pear Tree Street
Derby
DE23 8PN

Dear Mrs Oldershaw

Special measures monitoring inspection of Pear Tree Community Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 13 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

The staff and interim executive board profile remains the same as at the time of the last inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority and school have written a statement of action and devised plans to help the school to improve. This plan is fit for purpose. It identifies priorities, actions and success criteria. The local authority and senior leaders have begun to evaluate the actions taken so far. While the plan is a useful vehicle to support the school, it would be best adjusted so that actions intended are spread over a longer time scale to avoid the school overloading itself with actions at the start of the implementation period.

The school has developed links with external partners to aid school improvement. An external consultant is developing the leadership across the school. The deputy headteacher from the local infant school is working with teachers to improve the quality of teaching. This support is well received by the school. Pear Tree Junior is part of a local cluster group of schools. This involves several schools jointly working to promote and develop school improvement. For example, a joint-training session helped teaching assistants to be more effective in supporting pupils' learning.

Senior leaders have confidence in assessments of pupils' progress which are made on a termly basis. These data show progress by pupils and groups and indicate how many pupils are on track to reach the expected levels for their age. However, the data submitted by the school remain a significant concern, as in most cases, pupils are shown to be making less than the progress expected and, in Year 3, pupils have regressed further. Assessments of pupils' progress and attainment are made from the results of a test. This means the school is not using teacher assessment sufficiently to make accurate assessments of the progress for all pupils.

Senior leaders have increased the monitoring of teaching and learning. This is through lesson observations, planning of learning, scrutiny of pupils' current work and short visits to classes. While detailed records are kept of the quality of teaching, they are not useful in helping teachers to improve. Furthermore, the school has a significant number of newly qualified teachers. Evidence would suggest that they do not receive detailed feedback on how to improve and they are not given enough guidance.

The interim executive board is highly effective and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board holds an accurate view of the school's current position. He is insightful, knowledgeable and is instrumental in helping the school to move forward. The interim executive board is given up-to-date information on progress data, staffing and teaching. However, there is a lack of confidence in the security of this information which is hindering the school in moving forward.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement action plans are fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector