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Kathryn Simmons
Headteacher
Bradfield CE Primary School
Cock Lane
Reading
Bradfield
RG7 6HR

Dear Mrs Simmons

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bradfield CE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 March 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 December 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior staff, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, representatives of the local authority and the diocese. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan for raising attainment were evaluated.

Context

There have been no staff changes since the inspection. The school has joined a local network of schools which meets half termly to share best practice in year groups, and a local authority raising achievement mathematics network.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school has set off on the right tracks to bring about improvement. The headteacher had identified the key priorities during the autumn term and so was well placed to implement appropriate actions following the inspection. Daily phonics sessions have been introduced across the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes following training for staff. Booster groups have been set up to raise attainment in Year 2 and, across the school, staff are implementing strategies to improve pupils' writing. A regular programme of monitoring teaching and learning has been introduced. The school's raising attainment plan is a working document which sets out the actions to be taken each term. It is clearly focused on improving teaching and pupils' attainment and progress, with targets showing what it intends to achieve in the long term. However, it would benefit from being clear who will monitor progress and against what milestones to avoid slippage. It also needs to identify who will evaluate the impact of the actions taken, and how it will measure the success of actions such as building the leadership capacity within the school. Work has begun on detailed action plans for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage, but these are still at an early stage.

Governors' commitment to and support for the school are not in question. They acknowledge the need to refocus their work, but are not clear enough about how to do this or about their role in challenging senior leaders and holding them to account to drive improvement at the pace that is required.

The local authority's plan is based on supporting the development of senior and middle leaders through its officers working with them to develop detailed action plans to improve teaching and raise achievement. It has also brokered the support of a local leader of education which is due to begin shortly. The local authority has very recently undertaken a review of the effectiveness of the governing body and recommends that additional governors or an interim executive board are appointed. It is important that this issue is resolved as a matter of urgency to keep the school's improvement on track.

The local authority has systems in place for regularly monitoring the school's progress. The School Improvement Management Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services, will evaluate the impact of its support.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. It would benefit from more specific timelines and clearer success criteria to make monitoring and evaluation easier.

The school's raising attainment plan is 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 Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Berkshire and the Diocese of Oxford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey
Her Majesty's Inspector