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13 September 2013

Mr Ashley Howard
Headteacher
Manor Infant School
Inverness Road
Portsmouth
PO1 5QR

Dear Mr Howard

Special measures monitoring inspection of Manor Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 11 September 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 February 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, members of staff and a representative from the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's post-Ofsted improvement plan were evaluated. The school's procedures for checking and recording the suitability of staff to work with children were scrutinised.

Context

You started working at the school as the newly appointed headteacher in September 2013. Since the section 5 inspection, an interim executive board has replaced the governing body; one teaching assistant has left the school; a new teaching assistant and a new teacher have been appointed. An existing member of staff has joined the senior leadership team.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

In a very short space of time, you have established raised expectations of staff and pupils. One member of staff stated: 'I feel clearer in what I am teaching.'

Along with members of the interim executive board, you have worked with staff to agree a shared vision for the school and are developing a clear sense of purpose. There is already evidence of improvement in the behaviour of pupils and how undesirable behaviour is managed by staff.

The interim executive board has started to challenge leaders and managers about their work aimed at improving the school and raising standards. As a result, a more rigorous system to track and monitor the progress that pupils make is being introduced. Furthermore, the role and membership of the senior leadership team is currently under review in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the team.

The school has a single central record (SCR) in place which highlights that appropriate checks are undertaken to verify the suitability of staff to work with children. However, the SCR does not always record the member of staff who checked the documentation confirming the identity of new staff. You recognise this as an important area for improvement.

You are working closely with the interim executive board to create the school's post-Ofsted improvement plan. However, this plan is still in the early stages of development. Despite a few strong elements within the initial drafted plan, the following improvements are required in order to provide a clear road map out of special measures.

- Ensure the impact of proposed actions is closely linked to accelerating the achievement of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure the plan identifies start dates, completion dates and when progress towards end-of-year targets will be checked.
- Include quantified targets against which progress can be measured at regular intervals.
- Include clear expectations and progress targets for the most-able pupils.
- Provide more detail about how children's achievement in reading and writing will be accelerated in the Reception Year.
- Link the management of teachers' performance more closely to the progress made by the pupils they teach.
- Identify training needs for members of the interim executive board, such as learning to interpret data about the progress made by different groups of pupils.

- Ensure the improvement plan specifies what evidence will be gathered to demonstrate the impact of initiatives.

The school's Education Improvement Officer has been effective in brokering a range of relevant support for you and the interim executive board. The support is closely aligned with the areas identified as being in need of improvement following the section 5 inspection.

The local authority's statement of action was drafted in the summer term in the absence of a substantive headteacher at Manor Infant School and while significant changes were taking place regarding governance at the school. Consequently, the statement of action lacks essential detail and sufficient challenge to help the school to improve rapidly and securely. The lack of quantified targets in some areas, such as the need to accelerate the achievement of pupils, limits the effectiveness with which progress can be accurately checked. Greater attention is also needed in monitoring the progress made by pupils who are more able, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 1, and in raising the achievement of children in Reception particularly in reading and writing.

As a result of this monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's post-Ofsted improvement action plan is not 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 and the Director of Children's Services for Portsmouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector