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2 October 2013

Ms Mel Mellody
The Acting Headteacher
Biggin Hill Primary School
Old Tye Avenue
Westerham
TN16 3LY

Dear Ms Mellody

Special measures monitoring inspection of Biggin Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 18 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 academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, members of the governing body and interim academy board, a representative of the proposed sponsor, midday supervisors and teachers. Brief visits were made to classrooms to look at the impact of the actions which the academy has taken since the previous inspection. A range of documentation was reviewed, including a summary of progress against the action plan and staff handbook. The trustee's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection, the substantive headteacher has left the academy and there is currently an acting headteacher. The academy is seeking to become a sponsored academy with Charles Darwin School as the preferred sponsor. A reduced governing body retains responsibility for the academy, but an interim academy board has been commissioned to monitor the implementation of the academy's action plan and

standards within the academy. A new inclusion manager has been appointed to strengthen the leadership team.

The quality of leadership and management at the academy

Senior leaders have made a good start in beginning to improve the academy. The academy's improvement plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and has appropriate priorities and measurable interim milestones, so that progress can be judged at suitable intervals. An external consultant, who has experience of supporting schools in special measures, has been commissioned to support the acting headteacher. A further consultant is working with the mathematics coordinator to establish clear priorities and targets to aid improvement in mathematics.

Senior leaders hold regular meetings with support staff and this has improved communication across the academy. Staff at all levels say that they feel more included and that 'we are a team now'. Regular monitoring of staff performance is resulting in support for teachers who are seeking to improve their practice. Expectations for behaviour management, marking, teaching and learning are set out clearly in a new staff handbook. More frequent reviews of pupils' progress are being conducted, so that staff can accurately evaluate pupils' progress and identify areas of learning where pupils need additional support. Staff have had training to promote a more inclusive approach to learning and an inclusion action and development plan has been written to supplement the academy's improvement plan. Subject leadership has been reviewed and revised and teachers have had training to help them become more effective subject leaders. Many of these initiatives have only recently been introduced so it is too early to see their impact on improving teaching and learning.

The possible change of academy status has meant that an external review of governance has not been completed. Within the current arrangements for governance, the responsibilities of the governing body and the interim academy board are ambiguous. This lack of clarity regarding the accountability of these two different groups is not promoting improvement effectively.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

The statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority for Bromley and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis

Her Majesty's Inspector