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20 November 2013

Mrs C Wreglesworth
Executive Headteacher
Bedgrove Junior School
Ingram Avenue
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 9DN

Dear Mrs Wreglesworth

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bedgrove Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 19 November 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 July 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher and the acting head of school, three governors, and a representative from the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. A range of the school's documentation was analysed.

Context

The executive headteacher started immediately after the inspection report was published in October 2013. Her appointment is on a temporary basis and for the equivalent of three days a week. She is the headteacher of Bedgrove Infant School, an outstanding school. The substantive deputy headteacher is now the acting head of school. Two teachers, two teaching assistants and two members of support staff have joined the school since the inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders are beginning to make sure that teachers are held more accountable for pupils' achievement. The process for checking on teachers' performance is improving. Leaders conduct lesson observations more frequently, and consequently they have a clearer view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. Teachers have received useful training, for example in teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) and mathematics, which is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The best teaching is being shared more effectively. The executive headteacher has acted swiftly to broker an effective partnership with William Harding Combined School, a local good school. However, in terms of leading improvements, senior leaders' different roles and responsibilities are not yet sufficiently well defined. This is equally true of other leaders in the school.

The school's action plan addresses the areas for improvement through a range of appropriate actions. It is not clear, however, who will be evaluating improvements, how, and by when. The plan does not include targets for improvements in pupils' achievement, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, and the most able pupils. The plan does not show how the school will improve over the next 12 to 18 months because the timescales for particular improvements often do not extend beyond December 2013.

At the request of the local authority, the governing body will be replaced by an interim executive board in the near future. Governors have made sure that the necessary arrangements are in place for an efficient transition to the interim executive board. The minutes of recent governing body meetings show that governors have continued to challenge leaders more effectively. However, the governing body has not played any meaningful part in developing the school's action plan in light of the inspection. The role of governors in evaluating improvements is unclear.

The local authority has acted quickly to support the school since the inspection. It has helped strengthen leadership by brokering the executive headteacher's appointment. It has provided a range of support to help improve teaching and leadership, including regular visits by advisers, consultants and advanced skills teachers, and through brokering the partnership with Bedgrove Infant School. As a result, improvements are beginning to be made; for example, some pupils now have a daily phonics lesson to help them develop their reading skills. The local authority monitoring officer visits the school regularly to provide valuable advice and challenge, and he regularly checks the progress the school is making. The local authority's statement of action shows what improvements need to be made and by when, setting out appropriate actions to achieve this. However, targets for the improvement of pupils' achievement are not precise enough. There is also

insufficient detail about how improvements will be evaluated, including by the governing body or the interim executive board.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

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

The school's 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Buckinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes

Her Majesty's Inspector