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Mrs V Mees  
Headteacher  
Etruscan Primary School  
Dundee Road  
Etruria  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST1 4BS

Dear Mrs Mees

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Etruscan Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 February 2014, 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 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the executive headteacher designate, the inclusion manager, the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority. I reviewed the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans. I observed two lessons jointly with you and your deputy and I undertook two learning walks across the whole school, with your deputy and the executive headteacher. I looked at a small number of pupils' books briefly and, while in classrooms, I heard a small number of pupils read.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in November, significant staffing changes have taken place: some staff have left and others have moved classes or year groups. Four classes are currently being taught by staff on short- or long-term supply contracts. The school has several teaching and non-teaching staff on a variety of contracts which are currently being reviewed. At the time of this monitoring inspection, three permanent, full-time teaching posts were being advertised.

The most significant changes have been to the structure of the leadership team. The headteacher has resigned and will be leaving at the end of February 2014. The headteacher from a neighbouring good school, St Mark's Church of England Primary, has been appointed as executive headteacher of both schools. Although she will formally take up this office on 1 March 2014, she had already been working in the school for one week at the time of this monitoring inspection. On 1 January 2014, the deputy headteacher was taken out of her full-time teaching role in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is currently working with the executive headteacher to help lead and manage the school. On 1 March, she will become the head of school, directly accountable to the executive headteacher, subject to ratification. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed, but has yet to join the school. The teacher responsible for special educational needs has been taken off full-time teaching duties to focus on special educational needs and inclusion.

The Governing Body has been removed and the local authority is in the process of installing an Interim Executive Board (IEB).

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Since the inspection in November 2013, leadership and management of the school have been, and currently remain, inadequate. The school is unable to stand on its own two feet without the substantial support provided by the local authority. There is no proven leadership capacity within the school to take it forward. It is the local authority which is driving the improvement agenda in the school and which has overseen the rapid changes now taking place. Governance has remained inadequate; as confirmed by the recent external review. Governors have not understood their roles and responsibilities in respect of the use of public funds and the pupil premium specifically. For example, the school has a very healthy cash surplus but has a woefully inadequate stock of reading books and books in general, a lack that has had a significant impact on pupils' reading standards to date. The local authority's strategic decisions to remove the governing body and replace it with an IEB and to put in place an executive headteacher are highly appropriate.

The executive headteacher has the full support of staff. It is reported that parents, too, are happy with her appointment. In a very short space of time, with the support of the school's local authority officer, she and the deputy have ensured that all pupils in the school have undertaken reading tests. The information gathered provides a very clear baseline from which the school can move forward. Nevertheless, although new, this information is not being used in lessons to match pupils to reading books and texts correctly and to ensure that groups of pupils with similar reading ages work on texts of similar difficulty. In the current Year 6 cohort, approximately half of pupils have reading ages below their birthday ages. Of those with appropriate reading ages, the work given to them in the guided reading session observed was too easy.

The school devotes 30 minutes each day to guided reading, in addition to the time given to it in English lessons. This two and half hours each week is not used well, due to the format of the reading session. Over the course of the week, pupils undertake one of five pre-planned activities, in a carousel format. Pupils complete low-level written activities on some days when, over the five days, they could be reading whole novels.

The teaching of reading has not had a high enough priority in the school. There is no whole-school reading policy and in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, there is no evidence of the systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The school has, very recently, purchased a new scheme to teach early reading and teachers and teaching assistants have undertaken training on its use.

Following the advice of a consultant, the school has set classes in upper Key Stage 2 for mathematics. In a Years 5/6 upper set mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress due to the challenge and level of the work planned for them.

The executive headteacher has already had a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour, notably at lunchtimes, as a result of the changes she has made to the routines at this point in the day.

Attendance has improved; currently it is just over 93%, closer to the national figure. However, persistent absenteeism remains too high.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plans are fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint any more newly qualified teachers. A newly qualified teacher had already been appointed to the school, prior to this inspection. As a matter of urgency, the local authority and executive headteacher must ensure that a comprehensive support and induction programme is available to this teacher and that she has the chance to see good and outstanding practice in other schools. I shall be pursuing this issue at my subsequent visits.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director of People Services for Stoke-on-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington

**Her Majesty's Inspector, Senior.**