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7 March 2014

Mrs Morven Stroud
Headteacher
Gorsefield Primary School
Robertson Street
Radcliffe
Manchester
M26 4DW

Dear Mrs Stroud

Special measures monitoring inspection of Gorsefield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 March 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, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the chair of the raising achievement committee and a representative of the local authority. The school's improvement plan and the local authority's statement of action were evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection, the number of pupils has risen from 440 to 450 and the deputy headteacher has assumed the role of lead for teaching and learning. Additional part-time teachers have also been brought into the school to provide extra support for particular groups and classes. Currently, the governors are in the process of working with the Department for Education to identify an academy sponsor for the school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

It is clear that you, the staff and governors have a shared determination to bring about improvement and are working very hard to this end.

Since the inspection, you have established a coherent programme of training and monitoring to help improve the quality of teaching. You have made a considerable investment in new books and reference materials, have introduced a new handwriting scheme and revised the

mathematics planning and target setting to give pupils greater opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills through problem solving.

Middle leaders are clear about their responsibilities and are very keen to review their practice and bring about improvements in the areas for which they are responsible. The school improvement plan has precise timescales, success criteria and milestones for assessing progress. However, it does not take full account of all the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. For example, it is unclear how you and your staff intend to increase the progress and attainment of middle ability and the most able pupils or how you will improve the accuracy of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. The 2014 and 2015 targets for Key Stage 2 are lower than the current national averages. No specific targets have been set for Key Stage 1. You recognise that the targets will need to be revised because they are not sufficiently ambitious to raise standards quickly.

The local authority is giving good support to the school. It has made a significant investment in providing advice and training directly or through brokered arrangements with other agencies. It has rightly made sure that you and your senior leaders are the ones who make the final decisions on how much and what type of support you need. The local authority's statement of action includes clear goals, success criteria and processes, timescales and responsibilities for monitoring the impact of its work.

The governors accept the need for greater rigour in the way that they hold the school to account. To this end, they have established a raising achievement committee to monitor progress against the school's improvement plan. This committee will also lead the work with the National Leader for Governance on producing an action plan following the review of governance which is currently taking place.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's improvement 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 Executive Director of Children's Services for Bury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

Her Majesty's Inspector