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Alison Tilbrook
Headteacher
IES Breckland
Crown Street
Brandon
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Dear Mrs Tilbrook

Special measures monitoring inspection of IES Breckland

Following my visit to your school on 7 May 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 on 21 January 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, three members of the governing body, a representative of the trust, a representative of the sponsor and senior leaders. The sponsor's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. You accompanied me on visits to several lessons where we observed teaching and looked at the quality of students' work.

Context

There have been considerable staffing changes since the section 5 inspection in January 2014. Your appointment as headteacher took place shortly after the inspection. An assistant headteacher has recently taken up post. You have also appointed new heads of department in mathematics, science, English and design and technology. A new special educational needs coordinator is due to join the

school in the summer term. An additional science teacher will join the school in the autumn term. A number of temporary teachers have left the school since the inspection.

The school's sponsor continues to be IES (International English Schools UK).

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have introduced a range of monitoring activities that have enabled you and your senior leadership team to gain a clear understanding of the challenges facing the school. You are devoting time to finding out where the most urgent improvements in teaching are needed. You are making good use of external resources, including Suffolk Local Authority's advisors, to provide teachers with individually tailored support plans which is leading to improvements. These improvements in teaching have had a positive impact on behaviour; in most lessons students focus on their work and learn in a calm and orderly manner. On occasion, their concentration drifts and important learning time is lost.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose

The statement of action accurately identifies the key priorities for improvement. Its focus on strengthening the leadership of the school through appointing new staff has contributed to the progress already made. IES representatives are monitoring the implementation of the school's plans on a fortnightly basis and are now working in a more effective partnership with the school's leadership and its governing body.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

You have already taken action to improve the quality of teaching. Much more work is needed but improvements have begun. The quality of marking, for example, has improved and students are receiving regular feedback in some of their lessons. Inconsistencies remain, however, and marking continues to be inadequate in some subjects because students' work goes unmarked for long periods of time. A similar picture is apparent in relation to the presentation of students' work. In some lessons this is exemplary and students are clearly proud of their work. In other subjects books are uncared for and work is untidy, students draw graphs and charts with pens and poor standards of handwriting go unchecked. You have recently introduced a new marking and presentation policy to tackle this but not all staff have implemented it yet. Leaders have not checked that the marking policy is followed consistently enough and standards remain too varied. You have rightly identified that teachers' understanding of assessment is also inconsistent. It is clear from the

scrutiny of students' work that some teachers are inaccurately assessing, often overstating, the quality of students' work. You have identified this and it is in need of urgent intervention as it prevents the school from gaining a realistic understanding of students' achievement. This, in turn, is limiting the capacity of teachers to provide work that suits the needs of different students. In too many classrooms, all students still do the same work, regardless of their abilities.

The governing body has responded to the outcomes of the inspection by creating working parties to monitor the impact of the school's work. These meet twice per term and report to the full governing body. In addition, governors have received training to improve their understanding of school assessment data. Governors and senior staff have also been trained in child protection and safeguarding matters; systems and procedures in this area are much more robust. Governors are visiting the school more regularly and have begun to look at students' work and visit lessons with senior leaders. As a result, they are better informed about the school's work.

An external review of the governing body is scheduled for late in the summer term.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint NQTs.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Chairman of IES UK. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector