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Miss Karen Sturgess
Senior Leader
Inkersall Primary School
Inkersall Green Road
Inkersall
Chesterfield
S43 3SE

Dear Miss Sturgess

Special measures monitoring inspection of Inkersall Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 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 in February 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, one member of the governing body, and two representatives from the local authority. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and school documents that showed the impact of improvements you and the team have made thus far.

Context

The permanent headteacher is on long-term absence and will retire at the end of this term. The deputy headteacher, who has been acting headteacher, was absent during the monitoring visit. Consequently, other senior leaders were sharing headteacher responsibilities. An interim executive headteacher will take up post next week for the remainder of this term. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed for September 2014.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since the previous inspection there has been significant turbulence at senior leadership level, including a period when both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been absent. Nonetheless, you and other senior leaders have worked effectively together to tackle the areas identified for improvement and are bringing greater clarity about what needs to be done.

You have introduced new systems to improve teachers' planning and are monitoring these regularly. However, these are not being consistently applied across the school and success criteria are not defined sharply enough for different groups of pupils. Changes to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are being implemented swiftly. Systems for regular assessments, the checking of pupils' progress and monitoring of teaching and learning are being established. However, these are not linked to pupil progress meetings. As a result, teachers are not fully accountable for pupils' progress. The school's most recent monitoring records show that these actions have resulted in some improvements to teaching and learning since the section 5 inspection, but there remains much more to do.

Your school improvement plan is aligned to the local authority's statement of action and shows how support from the local authority is being followed up by the school. However, success criteria relating to pupils' achievements are based on end-of-year outcomes only. The lack of precise, interim milestones at the end of each term makes it difficult for governors to be able to measure the extent to which actions are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

Governors are currently undertaking an external review of governance. The governing body has responded well to the recent inspection and demonstrates a determination to improve. It has taken immediate action to improve its effectiveness and to ensure that better challenge is offered to the school. Pupil premium funding has been introduced as a common agenda item at all meetings.

You reported that the meeting for parents that took place following the publication of the inspection report was well attended, and that they remain supportive of the school. There is a clear communication plan to keep parents involved and informed.

The local authority is providing considerable and well-chosen support. Its statement of action is a helpful document for coordinating the actions, resources and personnel involved in supporting and challenging the school. Regular visits by the school's improvement adviser to check progress are well established. The local authority has

effectively managed some mitigating circumstances to ensure that leadership is strengthened appropriately in the short term.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is 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 Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector