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5 July 2014

Mrs Lynn Nash
The Executive Headteacher
Delaware Community Primary School
Drakewalls
Gunnislake
PL18 9EN

Dear Mrs Nash

Special measures monitoring inspection of Delaware Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 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 March 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, in addition to our meeting and the visits to all classrooms that we carried out together, I had a discussion with three members of the governing body. I held a further meeting with the Chair of the Governing Body. I also held meetings with a representative of the local authority and a group of seven members of the teaching staff. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and considered the report completed following the recent review of the work of the governing body. Together with this, I examined the school's action plan developed since the inspection and the first report completed to review its impact. I also examined the record of statutory checks on staff and volunteers. Where appropriate, documentation is linked with the other school in the federation, Gunnislake Primary. This school was inspected at the same time as Delaware and judged to require improvement.

Context

Delaware is in a formal federation with Gunnislake Primary School, with one governing body. This federation has been in place for some years. Since the section 5 inspection of both schools in March, you have been appointed to the permanent post as executive headteacher for the federation. There have also been significant changes in the membership of the governing body. In May, the then Chair of the Governing Body and four governors resigned. The local authority has appointed three governors to the school who are extremely experienced in developing schools' governance. One is a headteacher of an outstanding school in the county, another is a National Leader of Governance and the chair of another primary school; the final appointee is the Chair of the Governing Body of a school which has made the journey from inadequate to good in recent times. One of the appointees has been elected as Chair of the Governing Body for the federation. There has been a review of the work of the governing body and a full financial audit, both conducted by the local authority.

Due to financial pressures at Delaware, and following due process, one member of the teaching staff will leave the school in August. One member of the teaching staff is absent through illness with a supply teacher teaching the class affected.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The executive headteacher and senior leaders at both Delaware and Gunnislake have worked effectively to develop systems for improving the rate of progress for pupils, and promoting the coherence of provision across the age groups. These have included developing a system of pupil progress meetings with all teaching staff, the analysis of progress data for pupils and regular observations of teaching. Six governors have been convened as a review group to monitor the progress made by the school against its action plan. This group meets each month. You provide a report on the impact of initiatives in the action plan to this review group. This system is new. So far two meetings have been held, but are clearly developing as a regular and useful review of progress made so adjustments can be made swiftly if appropriate. The school has also developed parent forum meetings to enable parents to hear about developments and share views. These systems are coherent and focused on improvement, but are still in a relatively early stage.

Governors and the executive headteacher are working on an action plan following the recent review of the work of the governing body, but this also is at an early stage of development.

The school's action plan is a comprehensive document. It provides a specific timetable of actions to tackle the issues raised in the inspection report. The plan outlines how success will be measured, with milestones against which progress will

be evaluated. There are ambitious targets for accelerated progress for groups within year cohorts as an integral part of the plan. In addition, there are clear systems in place for formal monthly monitoring and reporting about the impact of the work undertaken as part of the action plan. This is reported to the governor review group. The activities to be undertaken as part of the action plan are noted on a calendar which is shared widely within the school so that all can see the programme of improvements.

The local authority has acted swiftly to support the school, both before and since the last inspection. This has included brokering the support from a number of acting executive headteachers in recent times and the high quality aid for the governance of the federation. The external review of governance has been completed with an accurate analysis of strengths and weaknesses, together with recommendations for improvement. Local authority officers have already conducted a monitoring review of the teaching and pupils' progress in the school since the inspection, with another planned. The statement of action from the local authority promotes the school's rapid improvement. It has specific targets to measure impact, clear links to the federation action plan, identification of individuals responsible for each action, together with regular review points. The statement offers a wide range of support from local authority staff and commissioned consultants, with an appropriate focus on the specific issues for improvement noted in the last inspection report. You, as the executive headteacher, appreciate the support from the local authority's regular review and evaluation.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action 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 Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner
Her Majesty's Inspector