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Mr Gareth Thomas
The Interim Headteacher
Godolphin Infant School
Warrington Avenue
Slough
SL1 3BQ

Dear Mr Thomas

Special measures monitoring inspection of Godolphin Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 8 October, 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 June 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection meetings were held with yourself, as the new interim headteacher, and the headteacher and deputy headteacher from the nearby primary school who have been supporting the school since July 2014. I also met the Chair and two members of the 'transition board', one of whom is the newly appointed executive headteacher of the school. I looked at a range of the school's documents and visited classrooms to see pupils at work. The academy proprietor's statement of action and the school's action plan were also evaluated.

Context

The school has been very unsettled by significant senior staff changes over the last six months. The headteacher has been on long-term sick leave since May 2014. The deputy headteacher was appointed acting headteacher in June. Following the section 5 inspection, the local authority brokered support from a nearby primary school. This school provided a deputy headteacher to be an associate headteacher at the school

for four days a week. Since September, the acting headteacher has also been on sick leave and the associate headteacher has been leading the school. Now the interim headteacher has been appointed, the external support will cease. There have been two new teaching staff and currently the school has a full complement of staff.

As a result of a review of governance, the governing body has resigned and a new, very small 'transition board' has been formed, with four members.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Due to the significant changes to the school's leadership, progress against the priorities for improvement set out in the section 5 report has been minimal.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher from the support school have focused on setting up a more appropriate curriculum ready for the beginning of the new school year. In addition, they have worked with staff to agree rigorous guidelines for teachers, and they have begun a comprehensive programme of professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have improved the tidiness, layout and organisation of the classrooms so that pupils now have an attractive environment in which they can learn. Evidence of the early impact of the support school's work was seen in my visits to classrooms. For example, in Reception and Year 1 the teachers were using 'story maps' (showing the stages of a story) to improve pupils' writing. Classrooms were well ordered and had well-stocked reading corners.

Work has not yet started on significant areas raised by the section 5 inspection, for example reviewing staff performance or on setting targets for further improvement. There is significant work to be carried out in developing the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders at the school. Roles and responsibilities of staff have not yet been clarified. However, the concern raised at the section 5 inspection regarding the vetting of overseas trained teachers' right to work in the United Kingdom has been resolved.

Although detailed in some areas, the school's action plan is not coherent. The plan is not logically sequenced or sufficiently focused on the priority areas which were identified by the section 5 inspection. Timescales are not realistic. In many cases, the actions that are planned are not tightly focused enough. It will, therefore, be challenging for the 'transition board' to evaluate whether the school is making the necessary progress. The school's action plan has not yet been formally agreed by the transition board.

Some monitoring work has been undertaken by external consultants, for example in evaluating the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs,

and for those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, notes of visits do not clearly identify next steps or timescales to implement improvements.

The proprietor's statement of action does not meet requirements. It does not list the areas that the school was asked to improve at the last section 5 inspection. There are no proposed actions or timescales and there is no indication of how the school's progress will be monitored and evaluated. Similarly, there is no information on how the transition board will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the work carried out by school leaders and external consultants.

As a result of the change of governance, the 'transition board' has only just started work. Members of the board have no evidence of the progress the school is making as yet. The minutes of the board's first meeting do not show evidence of clear challenge for school leaders.

The pupil premium review, recommended at the section 5 inspection, has not yet taken place.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The proprietor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Slough and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department of Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexandra Butler
Associate Inspector