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23 October 2014

Mrs Susan Fedosiuk  
The Headteacher  
Twydall Primary School, Nursery and Children's Centre  
Twydall Lane  
Gillingham  
ME8 6JS

Dear Mrs Fedosiuk

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Twydall Primary School,  
Nursery and Children's Centre**

Following my visit with Barbara Saltmarsh, Additional Inspector, to your school on 21 and 22 October 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school's improvement planning remains unfit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of

State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Medway.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, so that none is inadequate and more is good, by making sure that teachers:
  - plan lessons at the right level that build on pupils' previous achievements, especially for the most able, girls and pupils eligible for the pupil premium
  - give pupils enough time in lessons to complete their work
  - provide suitable support and use appropriate resources with all pupils who have special educational needs
  - make sure that physically disabled pupils from the unit are properly included in lessons and have the specialist teaching they need to make better progress
  - provide clear information in their marking about how well pupils are doing and guidance on how they can improve.
- Raise achievement in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their knowledge to investigative and problem-solving work
  - ensuring pupils with physical disabilities from the unit make better progress in the learning sessions when they are withdrawn from normal lessons.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - ensuring leaders and managers regularly check records of incidents of misbehaviour, analyse the causes, and take action to reduce them.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
  - at least one leader can demonstrate they have undertaken training to ensure there are rigorous procedures to recruit staff
  - teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements are accurate
  - leaders, including subject leaders, gain an accurate overview of how well all groups of pupils are doing in order to plan effective actions to improve achievement in Key Stage 2
  - leaders develop a more accurate overview of the school's work and of the impact of their actions in bringing about improvements
  - leaders seek the views of parents and carers across the school
  - governors receive training about how well pupils are doing to better hold leaders to account, and make decisions about the spending of additional funds and pay for staff.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved, and an external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 21 and 22 October 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work and met with the headteacher and other leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and Vice-Chair, and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors spoke with parents at the school gate and made telephone calls to others. Inspectors examined a range of documents including pupils' work, the school's own evaluation of its progress, the school's improvement plans, teachers' planning for what pupils will learn, information about pupils' progress, records of local authority support and information about the work of governors.

### **Context**

The deputy headteacher resigned at the end of the summer term and now works at the school for two days a week within the senior leadership team. The teacher, who was an acting deputy headteacher at the time of the last visit, has been appointed permanently as the single deputy. Three teachers left the school in the summer. In September, a teacher returned from maternity leave, one new teacher joined, and two established part-time teachers took up the remaining vacancy in a job share. A temporary appointment has been made to cover the continuing vacancy for a nursery teacher. The headteacher continues to cover the absence of the special educational needs coordinator. The Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice-Chair and two other governors resigned in the summer term. Replacements have been elected from the remaining governors, and four new governors have joined.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Achievement continues to be too variable, with improvements among some older pupils set against declines for younger groups. Overall, achievement is not improving fast enough.

Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 rose sharply in 2014. More pupils than previously reached the expected level of attainment, and the higher than expected levels. The proportions of pupils who attained the expected levels in reading and writing, and the proportions who reached the higher than expected levels in these subjects also improved. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics rose to be above the national average standard for 2013 (the latest available figures). The improvement in mathematics was the direct result of highly effective teaching and support during Year 5 and Year 6. However, the improvements in writing were largely due to this year group's better starting points when the pupils joined Year 3.

At the end of Year 2, the proportions of pupils who achieved the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics declined. The proportions attaining the higher than expected level also declined in all three subjects. These lower standards are in sharp contrast to those seen at the time of the section 5 inspection, and reflect a fall in achievement in Key Stage 1.

The achievement of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) improved at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result, the gap between the attainment of these pupils and others closed. However, at the end of Key Stage 1 this gap more than doubled.

In Key Stage 2, pupils are now given regular opportunities to solve mathematical problems. Year leaders include these activities within the wider topic plans they provide for each half term, and responsibility for maintaining high profile mathematics displays in social areas is now shared. As a result, this aspect of mathematics is becoming more established in Years 3 to 6. This improvement does not extend into Key Stage 1, despite being promoted as a whole-school initiative.

A positive decision has been made to cease withdrawal of physically disabled pupils from lessons, except for the special physical and sensory therapies they require. Inspectors were very impressed by the natural inclusion of these pupils throughout the life of the school, in lessons, during assemblies and at social times. When talking with inspectors, these pupils were hugely positive about their life at school, as were their able-bodied peers and their parents. Inspectors observed a highly effective session when a small group of pupils were withdrawn for speech and language therapy. An important evaluation of the achievement of these pupils will be the subject of a review due shortly, after being deferred from the summer term.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teachers are working hard to improve lessons. However, plans still contain too little focus on meeting the needs of girls, the most able pupils and those supported by the pupil premium, alongside variable guidance for teaching assistants. These weaknesses are often the result of duplications or omissions between teachers' detailed and valuable weekly plans for mathematics and English, and the additional daily summary of all lessons they are also required to provide.

The deputy headteacher has provided a helpful scheme setting out clearly how children should progress in their mathematical learning. Year teams are beginning to make good use of this information when they plan.

Teachers have successfully adjusted the way that lesson time is used. As a result, inspectors saw pupils given ample time to complete their tasks, after some well-paced teaching and explanation from the teacher. However, inspectors saw that now, after setting the class to work, teachers do not always check closely enough

the work pupils do, or their understanding. This means important misconceptions are not picked up well enough, pupils waste time completing tasks incorrectly and progress slows as a result.

The school has taken effective action to enrich the resources available to physically disabled pupils, and teaching assistants were seen providing effective and sensitive support for disabled pupils and others. However, the effectiveness of this support varies too much and the school has recognised the need to audit and develop the knowledge and skills of this large team.

The quality of teachers' feedback through marking, and the impact this has on pupils' progress, remain too variable. In the best examples, teachers write timely, pertinent comments or ask pupils to correct an element of their work after discussion. However, marking is frequently cursory. Sometimes, unwarranted praise is given for work which is incorrect or of a poor quality. On some occasions teachers mark conscientiously but with little effect on the pupil's progress. This is due to a lack of clarity about how much marking is required and how much flexibility allowed, despite the revision of the school's policy and discussion in staff meetings.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school has taken appropriate steps to improve the way it records and follows up incidents of poor behaviour. Better records now enable senior leaders to see any trends emerging and to provide helpful information to class teachers and year leaders. The school has become more efficient in the way it contacts parents about any concerns. However, governors do not receive sufficiently regular reports or check records closely enough to validate the information provided to them.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

While there is some evidence of positive impact by leaders, there are fundamental weaknesses in how improvements are planned and the development of leadership capacity. These prevent the required areas of weakness being comprehensively tackled, and cast doubt on how any improvement will be sustained. The school's redrafted improvement plan remains unfit for purpose. It links with the areas for improvement but does not set out the necessary detail about what is to be done, the staff responsible or resources required, including leadership time. It does not show clearly enough how senior leaders and governors will measure what is accomplished. In some instances this vital information is omitted entirely. The plan does not tie in well enough with the local authority's statement of action, or set targets for pupils' achievement, including for the groups identified in the inspection report. Despite the serious decline in 2014, the plan does not include focused, urgent action to recover standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1.

The headteacher, other senior leaders and a governor have undertaken training to ensure that processes to recruit staff are sufficiently rigorous. Suitably trained leaders have been present on all recent recruitment panels.

The school has introduced effective systems to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments and relevant training has been provided. The deputy headteacher and another senior leader are accredited as local authority moderators and make effective use of this expertise to support and challenge staff. As a result, the accuracy of teachers' assessments is improving. The school ensured that end-of-key stage assessments in the summer term were appropriately checked through local authority processes.

Senior leaders have developed the school's systems for recording, checking and analysing pupils' progress and middle leaders now have better access to this information. However, there remains too little focus on using this information to improve outcomes for different groups of pupils. Some improvement is evident in the achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium and teachers are becoming more ambitious and creative in designing activities to promote the success of these pupils. However, an effective strategic focus on addressing the variability in achievement between boys and girls, or raising the attainment of the most able pupils, is not clear enough. The school does not monitor ability groupings for English and mathematics to check and address the over representation of pupils supported by the pupil premium in lower ability groups or of girls in lower ability groups for mathematics.

Senior leaders' evaluation of the school's progress is over optimistic. Success in relation to the school's improvement plan has been recorded as 100% to date. This is because the plan does not identify adequately how success will be measured, so senior leaders have focused simply on whether actions have been completed. Leaders have not checked closely enough for the impact of actions on pupils' achievement and governors have not been involved in this process at all.

Senior leaders do not understand how effectively teachers are working to achieve the improvement required. This is because, when they check teaching, leaders do not look closely enough at the learning of different groups of pupils, including the physically disabled. The feedback given to teachers is too general and leaders are not being equipped through training and development to provide effective feedback to teachers or to support teachers in self-evaluation.

Year group leaders and subject leaders are rightly being given more responsibility to lead. However, this is without a sharp enough focus on the areas for improvement or the recent decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Although subject leaders receive an increased amount of time for their additional responsibilities, this is not equally applied and the impact of subject leaders in different phases of the school is not consistent enough. Year leaders' time for their duties remains insufficient. Identifying a leader responsible for the achievement of pupils supported

by the pupil premium is helpful, but the role and expected impact need clearer definition.

The school has taken appropriate action to seek the views of parents and carers, including a questionnaire and more opportunities for parents to come into school, see their child's work and talk to the teacher. Governors are planning a helpful consultation with parents about the school's possible conversion to academy status. Inspectors found the majority of parents and carers supportive of the school. Parents say senior leaders and staff are approachable, and they feel able to share queries or concerns. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress and about the life of the school. However, a small number still feel uninformed about the school's improvement and about academy status.

Since the last monitoring inspection, circumstances have required the governing body to focus intensively on its own operation and the consideration of academy conversion. Until very recently this, together with significant personnel changes, has limited the capacity of governors to focus well enough on the school's improvement. Governors have recently devised a relevant action plan, which usefully focuses on appropriate priorities for developing the governing body. However, the plan does not focus sufficiently on holding the headteacher to account for school improvement, or link well enough with the school's improvement plan.

### **External support**

The local authority acknowledges that the school has not made sufficient progress. The school has not opened itself sufficiently to support from the local authority or to wider expertise from local good schools, as it should have done. This includes support available from the local authority when dealing with parents' concerns. This has delayed the impact of support. The local authority has been flexible and helpful by modifying planned support, for example in the leadership of special needs provision. The local authority has supported the governing body well by securing the services of skilled and experienced governors to fill vacancies, and through direct support to the new chair and vice-chair.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve teaching in Key Stage 1 so that all pupils make good progress and, where possible, attain at least the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2015.