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Ruth Whittaker
Headteacher
Manor Park Primary School
Church Lane
Aston
Birmingham
B6 5UQ

Dear Ms Whittaker

Special measures monitoring inspection of Manor Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 November 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 May 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the teachers with responsibilities for English and mathematics and year groups, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a local authority representative. During this inspection visit, the headteacher joined me on short visits to some classes. We talked to pupils about their work and looked at examples of pupils' work. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. I also took account of 40 Ofsted staff questionnaire responses.

Context

There have been significant changes of staffing and governance since the previous section 5 inspection in May 2014. The local authority replaced the governing body with an IEB in August 2014. The headteacher, who was suspended from her duties in January 2014, was reinstated by the IEB in September 2014. A teacher who was suspended from her duties in May 2014 was also reinstated. Both were at work at the time of this inspection visit. The IEB suspended one of the deputy headteachers

from her duties in September 2014 and she was not in school. The second deputy headteacher is currently on maternity leave.

The IEB appointed an acting deputy headteacher from within the school. He took on his new responsibilities from September 2014. The teachers with responsibility for English, mathematics, the Early Years Foundations Stage, and Key Stage 2 are also new to their roles. At the end of the summer term, 15 permanent teachers left the school. At the time of this monitoring inspection, 13 out of the 18 classes were being taught by temporary teachers. Six of the school's existing permanent teachers were working alongside the temporary teachers. For example, Year 6 pupils were being taught by three permanent teachers and three temporary teachers.

As part of the local authority's support arrangement, school leaders and staff receive support from local schools, including the headteacher and staff from Clifton Primary School. The headteacher from this school is a National Leader in Education.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school has not drawn up its own action plan. Instead, school leaders have amended the local authority's improvement plan. However, their amended plan does not identify who will lead on actions from within the school. In addition, leaders have failed to specify in the plan who will check that the actions result in improvements to teaching and to pupils' learning.

The school's systems for checking the work of the staff are too complex and are not making a sufficient impact on teaching and pupils' learning. Senior leaders and teachers with responsibilities work alongside staff, carry out brief visits to lessons, examine pupils' work and identify the actions teachers need to take to help pupils make better progress. However, the actions they identify are not always precise enough or prioritised for individual teachers. Additionally, the headteacher does not make sure that, once weaknesses are identified, they are followed up promptly. These weaknesses in leadership, coupled with the many changes of class teachers, has limited improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the school was previously inspected.

During brief visits to lessons, the headteacher and I observed pupils of different abilities often completing the same activities. Pupils told me that their work was too easy and that they would like more challenging work. Occasionally, we observed pupils not fully engaged in their learning because their activities were uninteresting or they lacked challenge. In some classes, the quality and standard of work produced by a few pupils had deteriorated markedly since September. In a number of classes, work in pupils' writing books showed significant weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, some of the classrooms were disorganised, making it difficult for children to find equipment on

their own. Furthermore, the planned activities did not always help children to deepen or build on their existing knowledge and skills. A few teachers, such as those in Years 1 and 2 provide pupils with helpful guidance when they mark pupils' work. Some teachers, such as those in Year 6, are increasingly planning activities that interest both boys and girls.

Governance has been strengthened with the appointment of an IEB. To date, members have had to devote much of their time to resolving a range of staffing issues. They have also reviewed the use of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils in the school. The Chair of the IEB fully acknowledges the need for members of the IEB to now focus more on checking the impact of all leaders on teaching and on the progress of different groups of pupils.

The local authority's statement of action is suitably focused on strengthening leadership, improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. The local authority has arranged an appropriate range of support for the school. For example, the headteacher and staff from Clifton Primary School have helped to review the school curriculum and ensure that pupils are taught a full range of subjects. They have also started to help set up systems for recording and checking the accuracy of information about pupils' achievement. Staff from Manor Park have had the opportunity to visit Clifton Primary and observe effective practice. The impact of this support has been hindered by disruption caused by changes in class teachers, and because senior leaders have not ensured that agreed actions are consistently implemented by all staff.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not 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 Interim Executive Board, and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cc. Chair of the Governing Body

Cc. Local authority