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29 January 2015

Ann Pratt  
Interim Headteacher  
Twydall Primary School, Nursery and Children's Centre  
Twydall Lane  
Gillingham  
ME8 6JS

Dear Ms Pratt

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

Following my visit with Julie Sackett, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27 and 28 January 2015, 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 third 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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 third monitoring inspection on 27 – 28 January 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed teaching from Year 1 to Year 6. Meetings were held with the interim headteacher and the deputy headteacher, other school leaders, the acting Chair of the Governing Body and the Vice-Chair, pupils, teachers and representatives of the local authority. The views of parents were considered in conversations at the school gate, in the 59 responses to the on-line survey Parent View, and in email correspondence from two parents. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books, and scrutinised a range of documents including teachers' planning for what pupils will learn, information about pupils' progress, records of the school's checks on teaching, governing body information, safeguarding and incident records, and local authority reports.

### **Context**

The previous headteacher, two senior teachers and two class teachers left at Christmas. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has resigned and the post is being advertised nationally. An interim headteacher joined the school at the start of term, appointed initially until July. Regular supply teachers are covering teaching vacancies. An additional, experienced teacher has joined the Year 6 team for one term, and contributes to senior leadership.

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

Older pupils' achievement continues to improve steadily. However, while there are some signs of improvement in the rest of Key Stages 1 and 2, these are too inconsistent between different classes and groups of pupils.

In Years 5 and 6, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and the quality and amount of work produced, continue to improve. The gap between the achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium and others is closing. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils entitled to free school meals and those looked after). Significant weaknesses remain however, especially in girls' mathematical achievement. In Years 3 and 4, there is still too little improvement. While some pupils here are making better progress, others' books show they are not yet doing so.

In Year 2, the school's information predicts that more pupils than previously will attain the higher than expected levels in summer term assessments. Overall, while some pupils' books show striking improvement since the New Year, there is insufficient completed work to support this assertion.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are increasingly included in the learning of their class and teachers make better use of technology to support teaching for hearing impaired pupils. When physically disabled pupils leave the classroom for practical learning in more suitable spaces, other pupils now work alongside them more frequently.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teachers have responded enthusiastically to clear, uncompromising expectations from the interim headteacher, supported by intensive, relevant training. Indeed, some staff expressed disappointment that a planned session about assessment was postponed due to inspection meetings.

Important regular meetings have been introduced between senior leaders and individual teachers, focused precisely on how teaching should improve to accelerate pupils' learning. As a result, teachers are beginning to think more carefully about how to meet pupils' different needs and they value new opportunities to try different approaches. However, in some year groups teachers focus too much on creating extra activities for groups and individuals, before ensuring that the way they teach regular lessons is as good as can be.

Pupils are now given ample time in lessons to complete their work but the tasks set do not always engage all pupils well enough. Furthermore, teachers still miss opportunities to step in while pupils are working, to support or accelerate progress. Teachers' capacity to explain things in different ways, using a variety of appropriate demonstrations, equipment or approaches, still varies considerably. Nevertheless, some teachers do demonstrate high-level teaching skills. It is pleasing to see that they are beginning to share these with other staff.

Marking and feedback to pupils is beginning to be more effective. Helpfully, the school's policy now promotes marking as a routine aspect of daily teaching. Increasingly, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to act on this feedback in class work which follows or individual tasks. However, this improvement is not consistent, including where teachers share classes.

Staff have thoughtfully upgraded displays in classrooms and social areas: to reflect the keener focus on learning, and in readiness to celebrate the increasing success which pupils are expected to achieve.

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

Pupils continue to behave well around the school and during social times. Pupils' punctuality and attendance is improving rapidly this term, and they are enthused by fresh opportunities to win house points and express their views through the new school council. The prominent display of the many trophies won by the school in

recent years, hidden away until now, has stimulated pupils' increasing sense of pride. Senior leaders and others now lead assemblies to bolster this growing confidence and to boost pupils' ambition.

Behaviour policy now focuses on straightforward "golden rules" and requires teachers to manage the behaviour of their own pupils well, while working as a team to support one another. These recent changes are already reducing the number of incidents and ensuring the swifter resolution of any problems.

However, too many pupils still under-achieve because their teachers do not engage them well enough during lessons. Some pupils avoid the challenge of learning by being silly or working very slowly. Some do not ask for the help they need. At other times, pupils misbehave because they simply cannot do the work the teacher has set, or it does not interest them sufficiently. Not all staff consider this well enough when they plan learning.

The deputy headteacher maintains thorough and reliable records of any incidents, which are now scrutinised regularly by governors. The interim headteacher has guaranteed to parents that the school will deal with any concerns within an appropriate fixed period. The school now displays prominently the names of safeguarding officers and completes prompt referrals to external agencies when required. The interim headteacher has already enhanced the safety, security and hygiene of the premises. Building on the on-going successful work of the sports coach, lunchtime supervisors are now equipped to provide suitable games and activities, which pupils much enjoy.

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

The interim headteacher provides astute, inspirational leadership and works closely with the extremely able deputy headteacher, whose leadership is flourishing as a result. Sensibly, suitable teachers have been promoted into temporary senior roles, boosting the school's capacity to improve rapidly. Effective temporary leadership for special educational needs provision is now in place, while the school advertises the permanent post of SENCO. As a result, pupils' reviews are now completed in due time and teachers receive helpful advice about how to support them.

The interim headteacher has already completed a well-considered re-organisation of staff responsibilities. As a result, all members of the team now have roles properly matched to their salary levels, with clear opportunities for professional development within a structure promoting better teamwork.

Senior leaders now hold all staff firmly to account for pupils' progress and the highest professional standards. Importantly, checks on teaching now include consideration of pupils' views and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as judging progress. Staff training is being developed to meet

needs identified in these checks, and teachers now access helpful opportunities to observe colleagues in good schools beyond the local area.

Senior leaders have devised an ambitious, comprehensive improvement plan, firmly linked to relevant external support, and based on accurate judgements about the school's strengths and remaining weaknesses. Communication with pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local authority has improved significantly. In return, parents are showing respect for the interim headteacher's firm stance on attendance and punctuality.

The governing body is now stable and fully subscribed after further changes to personnel last term. A public consultation about conversion to academy status closed recently, with the outcome to be decided shortly. Governors' rapidly developing partnership with the interim headteacher has increased their influence significantly. Governors' records this term show them beginning to use meetings and visits to the school more effectively to hold leaders to account and to check the accuracy of information provided to them. The new school improvement plans sets out a clear role for governors in checking the success of action taken by leaders and staff.

### **External support**

The local authority has served the school well by arranging the appointment of a capable interim headteacher and securing additional, expert support from the headteacher of a good school outside the local area. The local authority also arranged the effective interim leadership of special educational needs provision. Because senior leaders are now receptive to external support, local authority consultants are beginning to have a greater influence in the school, through the helpful advice and guidance they provide. However, in recent months, the local authority's support for safeguarding at Twydall has been inadequate.