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

Dear Mr Thomas

Special measures monitoring inspection of Godolphin Infant School

Following my visit with Melanie Cox, Additional inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 February, 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 that 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 June 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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 proprietor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint two newly qualified teachers.

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 Slough and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Alexandra Butler
Associate Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching in order that pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
 - children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have stimulating tasks that help them to make rapid progress in developing their basic skills
 - teachers always challenge pupils to do their best, including those who are more able
 - teachers give pupils enough opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills in all subjects, particularly in Year 2
 - teachers check the learning of all groups of pupils more accurately
 - teachers are held to account for pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels use an effective system for accurately measuring pupils' learning and progress and check the progress of different groups of pupils properly
 - accurate checks on what children can do when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are undertaken
 - records of assessments of children's progress for all classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage provide clear information about how well children are learning over time
 - checks are undertaken to ensure all employees have the right to work in the United Kingdom
 - leaders with responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs are fully aware of how these pupils are doing and that they receive effective support
 - training and support is provided for staff in the specially resourced provision so they can accurately monitor how well pupils in the unit are doing
 - governors are provided with detailed and accurate information to enable them to fully understand the school's performance and so hold leaders to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 February 2015.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior and middle leaders. In addition, the lead inspector met with a representative of the 'Transition Board', a group of pupils, a group of parents and carers, and two representatives from the local authority. The school's single central record was also checked. Inspectors observed 18 lessons jointly with senior staff. They made visits to a small-group support session and the specially resourced provision (the Launchpad). Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and examined a sample of pupils' workbooks from each class.

Context

The substantive headteacher has now left the school. The deputy headteacher remains on long-term sick leave. An associate headteacher has been appointed on a temporary basis to work alongside the interim headteacher. Two experienced teaching and learning mentors (who provide support for staff) have been appointed on temporary contracts. A new coordinator of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has also joined the leadership team.

Since the last monitoring inspection, 11 teachers have left the school. All but one of these has been replaced. Three of the new teachers are unqualified and two are overseas trained teachers.

It has recently been confirmed that the school will join a new Multi-Academy Trust from 1 April led by Baylis Court Secondary School.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement in some subjects is starting to improve. Progress in writing, particularly in Year 2, is accelerating. This is due to some recent improvements in teaching and higher expectations being set by staff. Pupils now have more opportunities to write in lessons. Two extra teaching groups have been set up in Year 2 to challenge the most able and this is having a positive effect on the progress of pupils.

School leaders acknowledge that achievement in reading lags behind that of writing. To help pupils in Year 1 who have fallen behind in reading, the school has put a programme of intensive support in place. The teaching and learning mentors run regular one-to-one reading sessions for these pupils. This extra support is already having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) remains inconsistent across the school. The subject knowledge of staff in this area is not yet good enough in many classes. Phonics teaching is too often targeted at the middle-ability pupils and therefore the more-able pupils are not challenged and the less able are finding the work too hard.

Provision for pupils with the most serious disabilities or special educational needs has improved. The teacher with responsibility for this area of the school's work has reviewed support for pupils and has also made very effective changes to the way pupils learn in the Launchpad. She has drawn up a comprehensive action plan to improve provision for all pupils with additional needs.

The school has undertaken more accurate checks on what children know and can do when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage. When stimulating tasks are set for these children they enjoy learning and progress well. Teachers' assessments of how well they are progressing match more closely with evidence in their learning journey booklets.

Systems for tracking pupils' achievements have improved and the assistant headteacher now analyses information on pupils' progress and attainment more rigorously. However, teachers are not yet using this to plan learning and to set future targets for pupils.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. Some teachers who are new to the school are still settling in and do not always follow the school's policies and procedures. As a result, some teaching is inadequate. More established teachers have shown that they are determined to improve and have responded very positively to the targeted support from the teaching and learning mentors and personalised improvement plans.

In the best lessons, pupils are challenged appropriately by their work and they know exactly what they need to do in order to succeed. Effective demonstrations and clear explanations show the pupils what they need to do in order to complete their work. Teachers check on pupils' learning in each lesson and where needed, they provide extra support or further challenge. Where teaching is not good, lessons are not pitched at the appropriate level. For example, in one lesson the work set was too easy for many of the more-able pupils and some pupils with special educational needs were given work that was far too difficult.

Some teaching assistants do not currently have enough impact on pupils' progress. This is mainly due to their lack of subject knowledge and the limited amount of information that teachers provide before the start of the lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is calm and settled. Staff manage the transitions between lessons well and pupils are able to talk about a rise in expectations of their behaviour set by their teachers. Parents and carers agree that pupils' behaviour has improved. However, newly arrived teachers do not always manage pupils' behaviour consistently.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning in those lessons that are well planned and where learning activities are clearly matched to their needs are very positive. The pupils speak highly of the recent changes to the curriculum and the introduction of school trips to enhance learning.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The new senior team has quickly gained a clear understanding of what needs to be done and has set about making changes with rigour. Nevertheless, progress in improving teaching has slowed due to the significant turnover of staff and difficulties with recruitment since the section 5 inspection. The senior team has been well supported by specialists who have been recruited due to their expertise in specific areas, for example, the two teaching and learning mentors who work alongside staff to develop their teaching skills. This work is still in its infancy, but there is evidence to show that this is already having an impact in some year groups.

Teaching is monitored regularly by the senior leaders, providing teachers with accurate and specific targets for improvement. A review of teachers' performance has now taken place and senior leaders are able to hold staff to account more effectively. Action is taken swiftly when teachers' performance is not in line with expectations.

The school acknowledges that there is still a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure that the middle leaders in each year group are able to undertake their roles competently. The school leadership team has plans to provide them with additional support.

The school's action plan is now fit for purpose and it includes ambitious and measurable targets for improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Senior leaders regularly gather a wide range of evidence to evaluate the progress the school is making.

The parents and carers that inspectors met commented positively on the work of the new senior leadership team. Parents and carers value the recent introduction of visits and outings and they can identify the benefits to their children's motivation and love of learning. They have ambitious expectations for the school's future and say they would like to receive more communication from the school regarding their children's progress and attainment.

The school's single central record is up to date and all new staff, including those who have joined the school recently from overseas, have undergone appropriate safeguarding checks.

The external review of the school's use of the pupil premium, recommended in the section 5 inspection report, has not taken place. However, effective support has been provided by the partner secondary school working alongside the assistant headteacher. She now provides useful information for colleagues and senior managers about how this group of pupils are supported and the progress they are making.

Following the judgment made at the first monitoring inspection, the proprietor has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose. This document identifies how members of the transition board will monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making towards the removal of special measures. Because the membership of the school's transition board has undergone some changes, several of the actions in the plan have fallen behind schedule. For example, 'school action group' meetings, chaired by the local authority, have been postponed. There are plans to enlarge the governing body so that capacity to undertake monitoring and evaluation of the school's progress is increased.

External support

The local authority has brokered the support of a school improvement adviser and a specialist adviser for special educational needs to visit the school fortnightly. Their work has increased the school's capacity to make improvements. The school has also brokered support of an independent early years adviser who has worked with the staff to develop better assessment systems and improve learning opportunities. On-going support is provided by the partner secondary school.