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19 June 2015

Mrs Margaret Gwynne
Interim Headteacher
Godolphin Infant School
Warrington Avenue
Slough
SL1 3BQ

Dear Mrs Gwynne

Special measures monitoring inspection of Godolphin Infant School

Following my visit with Catherine Anwar Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 17 and 18 June, 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 June 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.

I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint NQTs because the quality of mentoring and support for teachers has improved.

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 as below.

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 of 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 third monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 June 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met senior and middle leaders. In addition, the lead inspector met with a group of parents, a group of governors from the 'Transition Board' and a representative from the local authority. The school's single central record of staff vetting checks was reviewed. Inspectors observed 16 lessons, eight jointly with senior staff. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils, looked at pupils' work during lessons and examined a sample of pupils' workbooks from each class.

Context

Since the second monitoring visit there have been further changes to the leadership team. The interim headteacher and associate headteacher have left the school and a new part-time interim headteacher has been appointed. The executive headteacher, the headteacher from Baylis Court School, now spends more time at Godolphin Infants.

A new teacher has joined the school in Year 1 and an interim coordinator for work with pupils with disabilities or special educational needs has recently been appointed to cover a maternity leave. A new headteacher has been appointed, on a one year contract, for next academic year.

The school is set to join a new multi-academy trust on 1 September 2015 led by Baylis Court School.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Leaders are using effective systems for accurately measuring pupils' learning. The end of year results for the pupils in Reception class and Year 2 indicate that pupils' achievement is broadly in line with national expectations. This information has been checked by the local authority. However these checks showed that some teachers had not been accurate in their initial judgments about pupils' achievement and levels were increased.

Pupils in Year 1 are not making enough progress. This is because of several changes in staffing and weak teaching over time. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to provide additional support for these pupils in Year 2.

Boys still achieve significantly less well than girls although the gap has narrowed. This reflects boys' weaker engagement in many of the lessons observed.

The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is beginning to close in all subjects. This is because of the school's work on closing the gap supported and monitored by Baylis Court School.

Teaching assistants have little impact on pupil progress.

The quality of teaching

The standard of teaching across the school has not improved quickly enough. A number of teachers have little experience of teaching very young children and as a result too much teaching is not yet good. However, a number of teachers have continued to receive high quality mentoring. Together with the setting and monitoring of individual targets this has resulted in some improvement. Teachers are enthusiastic about this support in addition to the ongoing advice they are receiving from the school based maths consultant. However the impact of this work was not witnessed in classrooms during maths lessons.

Pupils do not make enough progress in all lessons. Often, teachers' instructions are unclear. Teachers do not use information about pupils' progress sharply enough to make sure that activities are sufficiently challenging for the most able and help pupils to learn quickly.

Nevertheless, inspectors saw some better practice in some lessons. Here, teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and are quick to amend activities if they believe the pupils need greater challenge or further support. Opportunities for developing reading and writing skills, particularly in Year 2, have improved.

Some staff do not always use accurate English when speaking to pupils. There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar in written instructions and marking of pupils' work. This hinders pupils' progress in speaking, reading and writing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The pupils, in the main, demonstrate good behaviour. They can explain the school's behaviour expectations and work well together. Where teaching is inadequate, low level disruptive behaviour sometimes interrupts learning. However in many lessons the pupils are keen to share their learning and take pride in their work.

Some teaching assistants do not interact with pupils as often as they might during lessons to promote good behaviour for learning. This means that they waste time sorting out low level disruption which delays learning.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The leadership of the school has undergone more changes since the last monitoring visit. The school's improvement plan has not been used to keep work on track. Some monitoring and evaluation activities have taken place but, due to the leadership changes, these have not been comprehensive enough. As a result the progress the school is making towards the removal of special measures has lost momentum.

The new part-time interim headteacher has undertaken work to develop the skills of some of the teaching staff. Since the last monitoring visit the executive headteacher has raised her profile within the school and has become more familiar with the day to day management of an infant's school.

The attainment targets set for July 2015, set by external consultants, are unrealistic. School leaders understand the need to set targets based on a more accurate judgment of pupils' starting points.

Work requested at the last monitoring inspection to improve the subject knowledge and skills of teaching assistants has not yet taken place.

The transition board continues to act as the governing body. Seven new members have joined. Governors have not been checking the effectiveness of the school's work sharply enough. This has contributed to the too-slow rate of improvement.

Parents recognise the recent improvements in the teaching of reading and are pleased about the new reading books. Parents like the parent workshops offered by the school, and want to see more of these.

External support

The local authority continues to broker the support of a school improvement adviser who supports the school. She has recently overseen external checks of achievement in Reception class and Year 2.

Two school action group meetings chaired by the local authority have been held since the last monitoring visit. However, notes from these meetings are not clear enough to shape further improvements. The local authority's offer of support for the newly appointed coordinator for pupils with pupils with disabilities or special educational needs has not been taken up by the school.

The early years support from an external consultant as now ended. It resulted in better teaching and higher levels of achievement for reception pupils.

Support provided by Baylis Court School in advance of its multi-academy sponsorship in September 2015 is developing swiftly. A successful example of this includes

providing specific support for teachers to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers.