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24 October 2013

Mr Andy Jessop
Executive Headteacher
Thrybergh Primary School
Oldgate Lane
Thrybergh
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S65 4JG

Dear Mr Jessop

Special measures monitoring inspection of Thrybergh Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23 October 2013, 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 June 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a group of teachers. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection in June 2013 there have been a few changes. The headteacher left the school at the beginning of October 2013. Since then an executive headteacher, who is also the headteacher of an outstanding neighbouring primary school, took over responsibility for the leadership and management of the school. One teacher continues to be absent on maternity leave. One teacher joined and took up the role of a senior teacher within Key Stage 2.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher has held responsibility for leadership of the school for only 12 days and already has a clear understanding of the task ahead. Although the formal partnership with the executive headteacher's school, Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary School, is in its infancy, a clear start has been made to focus staff on improving the quality of teaching. Of merit is the fact that on the day of this inspection the executive headteacher and a senior teacher from the partner school delivered a model lesson that was observed by

most of the teachers. The teachers commented that this has been exceptionally powerful in seeing what could be done with pupils who are known to them.

Lessons have been evaluated by the executive headteacher and a senior teacher from the partner school. These identify for all teachers areas of potential strength and areas for further development. The plans for regular 'drop-ins' to lessons, formal lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work books and the evaluation of pupils' progress over time are sound and when taken together will provide a clear overview of the quality of each teacher's work over time.

The school's action plans are focused on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, and provide clear intent to drive improvements to the quality of teaching. The action plans pick out the things the school needs to do and the timescales for checking on progress. Although it meets requirements, overall it is not precise enough about the development of leadership, including governance, over the period of the plan.

The work of the governing body remains a cause for concern. There is limited capacity amongst the existing governors and there are currently six vacancies. The majority of governors are current or previous employees of the school or are related to members of staff. This limits their ability to collectively provide effective challenge and support and there is clearly scope for conflicts of interest. The Chair of the Governing Body is fully aware of these issues and constraints and she has a clear view of the need to improve governance and its impact. Although an external review of governance has been commissioned this work has yet to begin. Nevertheless, the Chair of the Governing Body has been diligent in making sure that a productive working relationship has been established with the executive headteacher, with whom she meets regularly.

The local authority has acted appropriately in securing a formal partnership with an outstanding school and securing the commitment of both governing bodies to having one executive headteacher for both schools. The only cause for concern is the development of the governing body. Plans are dependent on the outcome of the external review. Although the rationale for this is clear, it is hampering improvement given that there is a clear lack of capacity in the governing body and the local authority has not acted to recruit or appoint governors with the necessary skills to lead the school out of special measures.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plans are 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector