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Mrs D Blanckley
Acting Headteacher
Oxclose Village Primary School
Brancepeth Road,
Washington,
Tyne and Wear
NE38 0LA

Dear Mrs Blanckley

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oxclose Village Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23 April 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 January 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with a group of Key Stage 2 pupils, the acting headteacher, associate headteacher, two primary strategy leaders, two local authority officers, the Chair, and four members, of the Governing Body and the site manager. The local authority's statement of action, the school's action plan, lesson observation records and the most recent self-evaluation documents were evaluated.

Context

The substantive headteacher is currently on sick leave. The deputy headteacher is acting headteacher and she is being supported for three days per week by an associate headteacher from Newbottle Primary School who is also a local leader in education. A specialist leader in education, from the same school, is supporting

initiatives to tackle weaknesses in mathematics. An experienced deputy headteacher from Barnes Infant School is providing leadership support in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Three new members of the governing body have been appointed since the inspection and two associate governors, from the parent and carer community, have been invited to support the work of governors. In addition, one community governor and a local authority nominated governor have been appointed. Several staff remain absent so the school is reliant on three supply teachers.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority and governors have acted quickly to secure the leadership of the school following the absence of the substantive headteacher. School-to-school support is providing the required help for the acting headteacher and governors to implement the key actions needed to tackle the school's longstanding weaknesses. The school's action plan provides a coherent set of activities which match the areas for improvement in the inspection report. Short-term reviews have started to track progress against targets and this work is resulting in higher expectations of teachers' performance and pupils' attainment.

Senior leaders have given due prominence to improving teaching and learning. Actions are well considered and effectively coordinated. Already there is evidence that matters are being tackled robustly and with urgency. Weaknesses in teaching are being addressed through a coordinated staff training programme and backed up with systematic lesson monitoring. Partner school support has ensured that rapid progress has been made in tracking pupils' progress and this is providing teachers with the information needed to improve lesson planning.

Significant developments are underway to improve school governance. Newly appointed governors bring additional expertise and experience of school improvement. Training provided by the local authority is helping all governors to understand better their role in holding senior leaders and staff to account. Governors are helped by the better information they receive about the work being done to address the school's weakness. These measures are equipping governors with the skills and knowledge to challenge senior staff about whether actions are addressing the school's weaknesses quickly enough.

Health and safety concerns, expressed in the inspection report, have been resolved. Local authority support has strengthened the school's approach to tackling poor attendance and there is already evidence that absence rates have declined.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is 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 Executive Director of Children's Services for Sunderland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson

Her Majesty's Inspector