

4Serco Inspections

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Barbara Carter

Headteacher

Rood End Primary School

Rood End Road

Oldbury

B68 8SQ

Dear Mrs Carter

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Rood End Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 2014, 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 2014.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, four members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

At the end of the term, one teacher and one higher level teaching assistant will be leaving the school. Four teachers will take up positions in September, along with one teaching assistant. Three teaching assistant positions remain vacant at the time of this monitoring visit. Two middle leadership positions have been created: one to focus on the achievement of pupils eligible for sports pupil premium funding and the other to lead the improvement of the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). One new governor has been appointed.

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

It was clear from my discussions with you and the governors that there is clear ambition for the school to be removed from special measures as quickly as possible. Together with the senior leadership team, you have begun the process of improvement with determination. You have been proactive in sourcing a range of support from local schools and consultants in order to support school improvement. Assessments from the end of Years 2 and 6 show that, although results remain below the national average, many pupils are making better progress than in the past. This is because there have been some improvements in the quality of teaching.

Checks on pupils' progress are being made more frequently than at the time of the inspection. This is helping teachers to set more precise targets for pupils to enable them to take the next steps in their learning. You are ensuring that your judgements about the quality of teaching are informed by a range of information, including lesson observations, checks on the work in pupils' books and evaluations of pupils' progress. These are helping to provide you and governors with an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.

You have commissioned external support to check that the assessments made by teachers about pupils' progress are precise. This is helping to ensure that school leaders can accurately measure the impact of their work.

Leaders are currently using a range of documents to drive forward improvements in the school. However, the overarching school development plan does not focus precisely enough on the areas for improvement identified at the recent inspection. It does not clearly state who is responsible for leading each action and when, how and by whom the success of the actions will be monitored. It does not include the actions that will be taken to support teachers to improve their practice. While my judgement is that the school's action plan is not fit for purpose, you have a clear understanding of how to draw together the range of documents that you currently use in order to create one coherent and detailed plan. You have agreed to send the amended plan to Her Majesty's Inspector once it has been completed.

Governors are committed to playing their part in improving the school and are acutely aware of the need to ask more challenging questions of school leaders. They are aware that there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding which prevent them from being as effective as they should be. They intend to produce a governor action plan in order to organise appropriate training and support in response to the findings of the recent review of governance. Governors intend to observe the work of another governing body in order to improve their practice. An experienced

governor has recently been appointed in order to increase the capacity of the governing body to hold the school to account. Governors who spoke to Her Majesty's Inspector had a good understanding of the actions you have taken to improve teaching and the impact this has had on pupils' progress. Governors were less aware of the importance of comparing the school's results to other schools nationally.

The local authority has brokered appropriate support from a local school in order to help those teachers with additional responsibilities to develop appropriate leadership skills. The local authority has also allocated an appropriate amount of local adviser and consultant time in order to increase the school's capacity to improve. Support for phonics has been particularly helpful, with an increased proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics check in 2014.

Despite these improvements, the local authority statement of action is not fit for purpose. This is for a number of reasons. The plan does not include all of the areas for improvement that were identified in the inspection report. The timescales that are included are not precise enough and there are insufficiently frequent or quantifiable milestones included to enable progress to be evaluated effectively. While an appropriate amount of support has been allocated to the school, the plan is not precise enough in outlining how this support will lead to school improvement. The revised statement of action will be scrutinised at the next monitoring visit.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action not fit for purpose

The school's improvement plan is not 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 Sandwell. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Howie  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**