

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161
6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 3115307
Direct email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com

13 June 2014

Mrs Sue Fedosiuk
Headteacher
Twydall Primary School, Nursery and Children's Centre
Twydall Lane
Gillingham
ME8 6JS

Dear Mrs Fedosiuk

Special measures monitoring inspection of Twydall Primary School, Nursery and Children's Centre

Following my visit to your school on 12 June 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 March 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and representatives from the local authority. I toured the school and visited most of the classrooms and specialist areas. I evaluated the school's action plan and the local authority's statement of action. I examined a range of other documentation, including governing body records, the recent review of governance, and records of local authority visits to the school.

Context

Since the last inspection, the school has recruited a sports coach. The deputy headteacher and four class teachers will be leaving the school at the end of the school year. The school plans to cover the class teacher vacancies by redeploying

current staffing. The governing body and local authority have decided to seek sponsorship for the school as an academy.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have taken action to improve the areas identified in the inspection report. In mathematics, older pupils are now making more use of practical equipment and this is helping their learning. You have made sure that these new resources are suitable for all pupils, including those with physical or sensory disabilities. Older pupils are being given fresh opportunities to think about and solve mathematical problems. Stimulating new displays in shared areas reinforce key mathematical learning and provide interesting puzzles for pupils to attempt in their own time. These developments reflect the enthusiastic leadership of the acting deputy headteacher.

You have introduced new summary sheets for each class and these make it easier for teachers and senior leaders to track the progress of individual pupils, and groups, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, or those supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after). You have provided useful initial training for teachers in how to use this information to support their planning. During our meeting, you clearly stated your guiding principle that 'progress is important, for every child'.

You have provided new guidance to teachers about how they mark pupils' work and I saw evidence in pupils' books that this is beginning to be implemented. Teachers are now giving more guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work, and pupils are starting to write appropriate comments of their own in reply to teachers' feedback. However, this improvement is not yet consistent and in some cases, pupils are unable to read their teacher's handwriting.

In all the classrooms, I saw pupils engaged in their learning and working hard. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are more fully included. For example, the inclusion of teaching assistants in discussions about pupils' progress helps them understand better the support they need to provide in lessons.

You have employed a sports coach whose duties include supporting positive games at playtime. You have noted a reduction in arguments and behaviour incidents as a result. You have reviewed the way in which the school records and analyses behaviour incidents and you now consider summary reports with your senior colleagues. However, these records and reports still do not look closely enough for any patterns in the groups of pupils who are involved, and they are not routinely shared with governors, as they should be.

To support improvement in teaching, you have reorganised the work of leaders. Your senior team are now more involved in observing teaching and helping teachers ensure their checks on pupils' progress, are accurate. You have developed the responsibilities of year group leaders to include regular discussions with their teams about pupils' progress and more opportunities to observe teaching. However, you have not given these leaders the time they need to perform these duties well enough, and this is limiting their impact. Lesson observations by you and your deputies are frequent, but the recorded feedback does not always set out the next steps clearly enough, especially when teaching has been judged to be inadequate.

You have devised an action plan to steer the school's improvement work. This helpfully reflects all of the areas identified for improvement in the inspection report, and lists some relevant actions. However, the plan lacks the necessary detail about exactly what is to be done, timescales, staff responsibilities, and resources (including training and development). The plan does not show clearly enough how senior leaders and governors will check that the work has been completed, or how success will be measured. Also, the plan does not tie in well enough with the local authority's statement of action.

Governors are fully committed to the improvement of the school, and are actively engaged in discussions about transition to academy status. Although this is proving time-consuming, governors are working conscientiously to maintain their regular responsibilities and to improve the way they operate. Governors are beginning to act on the recently completed review of governance. A helpful new form has been devised and introduced to record their visits to the school and their reflections after the event. The Chair of the Governing Body has recently undertaken safeguarding training. Although other governors have been trained in safeguarding, this was some time ago and I recommend that this should be updated.

The local authority has increased its support and challenge to the school in response to the last inspection. The local authority's statement of action involves the provision of wide-ranging expertise and support to the school, without charge. This includes specialist support in the areas identified for improvement and expert reviews in the key areas of disability and special educational needs, and safeguarding. Consultants make regular visits to the school. However, their reports are not sufficiently focused on the areas identified for improvement in the inspection report, and they do not give a clear enough view about whether progress is being made.

The local authority has arranged for the headteacher from a local outstanding primary school, which also specialises in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to support the headteacher for two days per week. This

partnership is due to start soon. The local authority commissioned the helpful external review of governance, and is making arrangements for the external review of how the school uses its pupil premium funding, to take place before the end of the school year. It is disappointing that the local authority did not identify the weaknesses in the school's action plan when the draft was shared.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action 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 Medway. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton
Her Majesty's Inspector