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Mr Tony Coppin
Interim headteacher
The Mayflower Primary School
Main Road
Dovercourt
Harwich
Essex
CO12 4AJ

Dear Mr Coppin

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Mayflower Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 January 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 September 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes. An interim headteacher took up his post in October. A new deputy headteacher started at the school in January. One teacher has left the school and the school has employed a

full-time teacher to work with pupils in Year 1 on improving reading for boys and pupils who are eligible for additional support.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The interim headteacher has taken immediate action to improve the quality of teaching. He has met with every teacher and their individual targets are now linked to improving pupils' achievement. The half-termly pupil-progress meetings mean that senior leaders check that pupils are not falling behind. The interim headteacher has observed the teaching of every teacher and given them clear advice on how to improve. As a result, teachers are clear about what they must do to make sure that teaching is good. All teachers have visited other schools to look at ways to help pupils work things out for themselves and how to create interesting wall displays. The good outcome of these visits is evident because classrooms are bright and welcoming. In one good example of how pupils are being encouraged to think through problems for themselves, photographs of the pupils working have captions explaining exactly how they worked out the answer to mathematical problems.

The school's action plan sets out what is being done to improve the school but actions are not linked closely enough to the findings of the inspection. The local authority statement of action meets requirements. There are clear timescales and high expectations set for school improvement. The school and local authority plans are not yet in line and there is no overview calendar showing when activities will take place. This has resulted in some planned activities having to be postponed because the school is trying to do too much training at the same time.

The school does not have a Chair of the Governing Body. The interim headteacher is meeting with a possible candidate, recommended by governor services, at the end of this monitoring inspection. The Vice-Chair of the Governing Body knows and understands the school well. She has guided other governors in how to ask searching questions about how well pupils are getting on and whether or not this is good enough. The local authority has removed some delegated powers from the governing body. These include spending above £5000 and some personnel powers. There are appropriate arrangements for keeping parents and carers informed and seeking their views through regular newsletters. The school has improved their systems for keeping pupils safe since the inspection and these now meet requirements. The health and safety issues raised in the inspection report have been put right.

The local authority is providing a good level of support to the school. This was agreed soon after the inspection. The Quadrant Commissioner has observed lessons with the headteacher. A teaching and learning consultant is working with the school,

as are consultants for disabled pupils and those who need extra help, the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and governor services. Other adults who work in the classroom have been trained in how to support pupils who find learning difficult. Two advanced skills teachers (ASTs) have been allocated to work with the mathematics leader and to improve teaching across the school. All teachers have received training on the use of a computer-based pupil-progress tracking program. The senior management team has been trained in how to use and interpret information about how well pupils are getting on. An executive headteacher is working with the interim headteacher one day a week to support school improvement.

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 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 Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector