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Allyson Brown
Interim Headteacher
Dawley Church of England Primary School with Nursery
Doseley Road North
Dawley
Telford
TF4 3AL

Dear Ms Brown

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Dawley Church of England Primary School with Nursery

Following my visit to your school on 9 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, as interim headteacher, and the newly appointed headteacher. I also met with the school's business administrator, two representatives from the local authority, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and two other members of the board. I visited all classes to review pupils' learning, accompanied by you and the newly appointed headteacher. I viewed the single central register, which confirms that safeguarding checks have been made on staff, and evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan.

Context

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has resigned and will retire at the end of August 2014. She has been absent due to ill health since the inspection. The local authority seconded you to the school in January 2014. The IEB, which has replaced

the governing body, has appointed a permanent headteacher, two teachers, a business manager and a deputy headteacher. These appointments will take effect from 1 September 2014. One teacher has recently returned to the school from maternity leave. The IEB is in the early stages of discussion with the Department for Education and the local authority regarding the school's planned conversion to academy status.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since taking on your role as interim headteacher, you have taken swift and decisive action to drive ahead the changes needed. Importantly, with the support of the local authority, you have established a set of accurate information about the standards of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. This information is being used to set appropriate targets for all pupils. You have introduced a robust system to enable senior leaders and teachers to keep a close check on the progress that pupils are making. Teachers are now clear about what is expected of them and how they are accountable for pupils' achievement.

You have responded to the weaknesses in teaching identified at the last inspection. You regularly check the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books. Your feedback to teachers is detailed and provides precise guidance on how to improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. You are aware of the need to confirm your judgements on the quality of teaching by using assessment data and pupils' work in order to gain a more detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching over time. Your monitoring file shows that some improvements have been made to the quality of teaching.

You have organised a programme of staff training and development to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Appropriate reading books have been purchased so that pupils can practise their phonic skills when reading unfamiliar words. These actions have laid important foundations for the next steps that the school needs to take in order to improve the teaching of early reading.

With support from the local authority and the IEB, senior leaders have introduced systems to tackle frequent absence quickly. Attendance has improved. The current attendance figure is above the figure for the equivalent period in 2012. However, pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding miss more sessions than other pupils. Leaders are not checking carefully enough whether this gap is closing.

The newly formed IEB is meeting on a fortnightly basis to check improvements against the actions on the school's improvement plan. Your detailed reports to the members of the IEB are informative and helpful. They also work with the Church of England Diocesan Board of Education. They have an accurate understanding of the issues facing the school. Importantly, they each have a link with a member of staff who has responsibility for specific areas for improvement. For example, a member of

the IEB is linked to the team working with parents to improve pupils' attendance. This provides the IEB with first-hand knowledge of the school's work.

The local authority has responded swiftly to the recommendations in the previous inspection report. It has provided invaluable support for the school in helping it to strengthen senior leadership practices and improve aspects of teaching. As a result, a clear direction has been set for improvement.

The school's improvement plan has been included within the local authority's statement of action. The combined improvement plan addresses all the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 report. It is detailed and has milestones specified for each action. The proposed timescale for the school to come out of serious weaknesses is appropriate. However, the actions and milestones fall short of the given timescale. The plan should be extended appropriately to ensure that actions will be taken to continue improvements beyond autumn term 2014. Accurate information about pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics was not available when the statement of action was written. Now that this information is available, targets identified in the improvement plan need to be amended appropriately, as we agreed during this monitoring inspection.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the IEB, and the Director of Children's Services for Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram
Her Majesty's Inspector