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Beryl Hinds
Headteacher
Dell Primary School
Dell Road
Oulton Broad
Lowestoft
NR33 9NU

Dear Ms Hinds

Special measures monitoring inspection of Dell Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 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 May 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, four governor representatives (including the Chair of the Governing Body) and a small group of children. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. You took me on a tour of the school and I checked the school's single central record.

The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the recent inspection there have been a number of staff changes. Seven members of the teaching staff are new to the school, including three newly qualified teachers (appointed prior to the special measures judgement). The school has met with a representative of the Department for Education to discuss becoming an

academy. A sponsor has not been found for the school and the formal process of converting to a sponsor academy is not yet underway.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school's leadership identified improving behaviour and dealing more effectively with bullying as its first priorities following the recent inspection. A number of measures have been put in place and school leaders report that these are having a very positive impact. Pupils report that there is now a 'zero tolerance' approach to bad behaviour and that bullying has reduced.

The governing body was aware that the school required improvement but governors were surprised by the special measures judgement. However, they have accepted the report's findings and understand that achievement is not good enough and that expectations need to be raised. An external review of governance has yet to take place. The school is under the impression that this will be carried out by the local authority in October; the local authority, however, was unable to confirm this during my visit.

The school's leaders were not surprised by the special measures judgement and acknowledge the issues raised in the inspection report. The headteacher, with members of the leadership team and the Chair of the Governing Body, has written a detailed action plan. The school's plan includes a number of suitable actions but lacks the precision and clarity necessary to bring about rapid change. The document is large and unwieldy, making it difficult both to use and review. The priorities of the plan are unclear, because tasks are presented as an undifferentiated list. It is therefore not always possible to see clearly the rationale for planned actions or how the school will know if it has been successful in implementing them, since the plan lacks clear milestones and success criteria.

Although there has been contact between the local authority and the school's leadership, this has not yet been sufficient to bring about rapid change. The local authority has not provided the support detailed in its own plan, for example, to guide the school in producing a fit-for-purpose action plan.

The local authority's statement of action is difficult to follow. The actions are not always clear, relevant and specific and it is sometimes difficult to see how particular actions in the local authority plan relate to individual improvement points from the inspection report. The milestones lack chronology and it is unclear how this part of the plan fits with the actions section. This means that it is difficult to see how success will be measured and how progress will be monitored.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not 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 Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector