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Mr Carpenter and Ms Bansil
Headteachers
Foxfield Primary School
Sandbach Place
London
SE18 7EX

Dear Mr Carpenter and Ms Bansil

Special measures monitoring inspection of Foxfield Primary School

Following my visit with John Viner, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 February 2015, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school should not appoint any additional newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Greenwich.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching in all year groups so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching
 - ensuring all staff are ambitious for pupils' achievements, and work is set at the right level to provide suitable challenge for all pupils
 - making sure that teachers make better checks on pupils' progress and understanding in lessons
 - encouraging pupils to take pride in the presentation of their work
 - ensuring teachers use comments in marked work and constructive feedback in lessons so pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work
 - using teaching assistants more effectively to accelerate pupils' learning throughout lessons.
- Raise attainment in mathematics and English, especially in writing, by:
 - clearly identifying the expected knowledge, skills and understanding pupils should have reached by the time that they move on to their next year
 - insisting that pupils apply their skills in punctuation and grammar correctly
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in English and mathematics across different subjects.
- Give children in the Nursery and Reception a better start to their education by:
 - providing a range of stimulating activities to promote confidence and fluency in spoken language
 - taking urgent action to develop children's early reading and writing skills to prepare them well for Year 1
 - redesigning the outdoor area to provide varied and rich challenges that extend classroom learning
 - creating an accurate record of each child's achievements to plan activities based on their prior learning.
- Raise standards of behaviour and safety in the classroom, playground and at lunchtime by:
 - carefully analysing logs of pupils' behaviour to ascertain, and take action about, underlying causes of incidents
 - helping pupils to display respectful behaviour towards to each other and to adults
 - establishing a culture which prohibits bullying and provides pupils with the skills to manage it should it occur
 - increasing pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe on the internet.
- Secure strong and effective governance and leadership and management at all levels to build the capacity to improve the school by:
 - checking that plans to bring about rapid improvements are fully implemented and that they are having the desired impact
 - developing the skills of those with specific responsibilities to enable them to

- play a better role in raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements
- ensuring that leaders' view of how well the school is doing is robust and accurate and acknowledges the contributions of parents, staff, governors and pupils
- using data rigorously to check that all groups of pupils achieve equally well
- establishing robust procedures for checking on staff performance and holding all to account for pupils' achievements
- providing training to support those new to the school and to teaching to improve skills in managing behaviour and promoting effective learning in English and mathematics and for children in Reception and Nursery
- introducing a broad programme of work that enthuses pupils, especially boys, about learning, which promotes essential skills in English and mathematics across subjects
- restoring parental confidence in the school by raising attainment and rates of progress and improving behaviour.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 February 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other members and two representatives from the local authority, including the Head of Early Years and Primary and the Improvement Partner.

Context

Staffing and the numbers of pupils on roll have remained stable since the last monitoring inspection. Currently, three teachers with classes in Years 1, 2 and 3 are on long-term sick leave. Three permanent and experienced teachers have been recruited to teach their respective classes.

The Department for Education is in touch with the governing body and plans to visit the school in March 2015, when the status of the school will be considered. At the same time, the local authority and governors have started to discuss the possibility of the school entering a federation with Woodhill Primary School, particularly as the partnership is strong. The executive headteacher from Woodhill Primary School maintains a strategic overview while the head of school is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In lessons and around the school, pupils' zest for learning and their good behaviour show that they are very much enjoying their school. The most recent survey findings on parents' view indicate that 95% of respondents feel that their child enjoys being at school. Written comments from both parents and pupils confirm that pupils are happy and safe in the school.

Pupils told inspectors that since the new headteachers started at the school, 'expectations of work and behaviour are higher' and that they 'work to a set of core values and new structures'. These views underpin the transformation of the school which is now sharply focused on pupils' achieving high standards. As a result, their progress in lessons is consistently good or better; this is a stark contrast to their achievement in 2014.

Achievement in the 2014 national tests was well below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages. The phonic checks (sounds letters make) were also well below the national average. Standards in Key Stage 2 were the lowest achieved by pupils over the last four years. Although pupils achieved the minimum standard expected nationally for primary schools, they were

still significantly below the national average and progress was too slow for all groups of pupils. The attainment gap widened for all pupils who were at least two terms behind all pupils nationally. It was wider for disadvantaged pupils who were 16 months behind their peers in the school.

Since the start of the current school year, assessment information and work seen in books and lessons show that within less than two terms, pupils are achieving well. Monitoring of pupils' progress is rigorous and regular. Teaching is mostly good or better; pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are good and often exceptional, and the curriculum has been revised to re-engage pupils in their learning and reflect the interests of boys. Changes in teaching English and mathematics mean that teachers are focusing sharply on pupils using and applying literary and grammatical skills and mathematical skills accurately. Above all, pupils are being stretched. For example, in English, there is emphasis on pupils knowing and understanding key vocabulary, writing for a range of purposes and audiences, and developing personal responses to challenging texts normally reserved for secondary schools. This is exemplified in Year 6, where pupils were seen reading and analysing the use of language in *The Hunger Games*. In mathematics, problem solving and mastering basic number skills underpin work. Targets set for English and mathematics are ambitious but realistic, primarily because the planned changes have led to pupils working diligently. This has led to them meeting expectations, with an increasing minority exceeding them.

Provision in early years is much improved in relation to the learning environment, which is now used very well to promote children's literacy skills and their social and personal development. Improvements in the physical environment mean that there is more emphasis on school readiness. Activities are well planned and lead to children settling quickly and showing interest in their learning. The sharper focus on teacher-led activities, group work and individual activities has led to staff developing children's thinking, talking and focusing more on using high quality writing activities to promote children's writing skills. As a result of improvement in teaching and professional development, most children are expected to exceed the previous year's targets, when 70% reached a good level of development.

Targets are moderated internally and externally to ensure accuracy and reliability. If the ambitiously high targets are achieved at the end of both key stages, pupils will far exceed the standards expected nationally. Steps are being taken to ensure that groups such as the most able, boys, disadvantaged pupils and White British pupils, who previously underperformed, can achieve better results. For example, there is specialist support in English and mathematics to ensure that the most able pupils can achieve the higher levels in the national tests. The appointment of a pupil premium champion means that there is an even stronger emphasis on holding staff to account for the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Skilfully managed provision for pupils with a disability and/or special educational needs ensures that support staff are well trained to deliver interventions and provide very good quality support in lessons. Similar provision is available for pupils who join the school with little or no

English. The challenge for the school is to ensure that that the rapid progress being made is sustained over time in order to achieve the ambitious targets in 2015.

The quality of teaching

Teaching is of much better quality and as a result, pupils are achieving well, with an increasing minority exceeding their targets. Well-developed systems are used to ensure that lessons run smoothly and pupils are consistently engaged in learning. Expectations of high quality teaching are clearly defined and recognised as the main benchmark for all staff in the following: non-negotiables that are linked to early years and the National Teaching Standards; core teaching and learning expectations and expectations of pupils' work in English and mathematics. Additionally, clear guidelines on feedback for learning, extensive training, team planning, training and development, and joint work with staff from Woodhill Primary School underpin the rapid progress made in developing teaching and accelerating pupils' progress. As a result, the quality of work pupils now produce bears no resemblance to that of their work in the previous school year.

Pupils told inspectors that 'there is more challenge in lessons since the headteachers began leading the school.' They said, 'We do much more learning now. Before, we were not challenged' and 'I am no longer practising what I already know. I am learning new things.' Although pupils are suitably challenged, a few of the most able indicated that work could always be more challenging.

Inadequate teaching has been confined to the past and monitoring records show that the school has exceeded its target to improve teaching. Currently, over 70% of teaching is identified as good or better. Work in pupils' books confirm that the change is not a one-off but a continuous process of improvement. In the 23 lessons seen and the short visits to other sessions such as physical education, pupils' readiness to begin working supported their learning very well. In all lessons, teachers were relentless in focusing on the learning intentions which pupils said contribute to them learning well. Other characteristics that have led to pupils making better progress include: teachers consistently demonstrating how to apply the taught skills to produce good quality work; close attention given to developing a rich learning environment with learning walls to support learning; information technology used very well to highlight taught skills, and skilful questioning used to increase pupils' communication skills and understanding of the work. Additionally, teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support and relationships are very good, as is classroom management.

The quality of marking is good overall but sometimes technical errors are missed and pupils do not always respond to the detailed comments. Occasionally, the pace of teaching is too quick, which does not help all pupils to grasp immediately the skills being taught.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons are never less than good and often they are outstanding. Pupils' response to the school's expectations is replicated around the school. Pupils confirmed that behaviour is good rather than outstanding because 'a handful' of their peers with behavioural difficulties occasionally disrupt their learning. The school has introduced and developed strong systems for managing pupils' behaviour and interventions are well monitored. The Harbour Unit, mentors and other support staff provide very good quality support and, where necessary, early help is sought through universal services. Very good attention is given to keeping pupils safe and pupils, like their parents, say they are safe. Direct approaches to covering different forms of bullying and practical guidelines on e-safety in lessons and assemblies mean that pupils are very aware of how to stay safe and can differentiate between different forms of bullying. The few incidents of misbehaviour, such as racist name-calling, are carefully logged and dealt with.

Attendance at 95% is average for primary schools. Rigorous systems are used to tackle persistent absence, which is mainly found in Years 5 and 6. Punctuality to school and persistent absence are much improved, based on the imaginative use of introducing a fine and/or a meeting with the head of school. Very few exclusions have taken place since the new school year and, where necessary, managed move to another school is used. Pupils are caring and relationships are very good. Those appointed as junior leaders or mentors say it has given them a strong sense of responsibility.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher and head of school work very well as a coherent team and together they have inspired and led the staff through a number of complex changes by explaining the long-term vision of raising standards. Senior and middle leaders and other staff who met inspectors understand the vision of improvement and have bought into it, have higher expectations and believe that pupils can achieve. Changes have been rapid but well thought out and linked to research and adapted to the needs of the school. The headteachers have driven teachers and established their commitment to the school so that there is no veering from the recovery plan. While their open approach to managing change has also meant that they are not reluctant to give difficult messages about teachers' performance, they also ensure that priority is given to the well-being of staff. Morale is therefore high; teachers who have stayed and those who are relatively new to the school report that they can see the rapid progress pupils are now making. Support plans for the few staff whose teaching requires improvement are used effectively and evaluated. Similarly, newly qualified teachers are very well supported and feel valued. The governing body and local authority provide good support for the headteachers, who, as influencers, are highly respected.

The headteachers are unrelenting in raising standards of attainment. As a result, changes started in the latter part of the previous term are well developed. Robust systems for holding staff to account for pupils' progress permeate from the governing body through to all levels of the leadership team and all members of staff. Experienced teachers and lead teachers of English and mathematics, the curriculum and information and technology and science have been appointed to increase the capacity of the senior team. The headteachers, as role models, provide a range of high quality support and developmental opportunities to develop senior and middle leaders and other staff in relation to their responsibilities. For senior staff, some aspects of their work such as observing staffing and providing quality feedback are developmental. The persistent approach to monitoring teaching and pupils' progress, planning, professional development and providing a range of personalised and corporate training is well planned and linked to the priorities for improvement. These changes are having a positive impact on accelerating pupils' academic progress because information on their achievement is analysed carefully by groups, gender, ability and ethnicity so that additional support can be provided.

Governors, as an experienced body, as reported in the previous letter, form a formidable group that are intolerant of any weaknesses identified in teaching. They use their expertise very well to ask pertinent questions and validate all information provided through analysing pupils' progress, carrying out short but focused visits to lessons, providing feedback, and meeting regularly with staff and pupils to draw out their views on the changes. Governors' direct approach means that there is no hiding place for staff, particularly as they keep the performance of staff under review and are clear that payment is linked to good or better achievement for pupils. They have benefited from working with the National Leader of Governors but are now able to stand alone and steer the school without the continuous use of the mentor.

External support

The school works very well with the local authority and the Improvement Partner. Local authority staff have provided and tailored a very good range of support to the needs of the school to develop early years provision, the teaching of English and mathematics and training for governors. Teachers' receptiveness has helped to move the school forward, primarily because the diverse support is fully complemented by the internal support from senior leaders. While the local authority exercises its role to monitor the school's progress regularly, officers have reduced their work in the school based on the headteachers' adeptness in taking control of all aspects of the school's work and speedy recovery. At this stage, the authority is commissioning the headteachers to spread the benefits of their work further afield.