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3 March 2015

Ms R Beecham
Headteacher
Loders C of E VC Primary School
Loders
Bridport
DT6 3SA

Dear Ms Beecham

Special measures monitoring inspection of Loders C of E VC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 March 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 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 November 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with a local advisory headteacher, two assistant headteachers, the local diocesan representative, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers, teaching assistants, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also met with pupils from the school council. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were also evaluated.

Context

The substantive headteacher has been absent since January 2015. Leadership duties are being covered each morning by the headteacher of a nearby school and in the afternoons by two part-time teachers recently appointed as assistant headteachers. A representative from the Salisbury diocese is providing additional leadership support through weekly visits to the school. Three new members of the governing body were appointed in January 2015.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority's statement of action and the school improvement plan were presented to the inspector as one document. The local authority representative has worked closely with the school following the inspection to identify how the local authority will allocate resources to support the school and ensure targets are achieved in the timescales set. Staff and governors acknowledge the inspection outcome was the catalyst needed for change. The resulting changes in the leadership of the school have brought about much-needed reassurance for the school and wider community. Parents have welcomed the open communication they have received about the changes to the school's leadership. They are confident their children are looked after well in school and their individual learning needs are now being better provided for.

All staff and governors now have a clearer understanding of what needs to be done to secure improvement. Members of the governing body are confident the recent change in leadership has strengthened the school's capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. The improved communications governors now enjoy with senior leaders means they are beginning to exercise greater confidence in carrying out their statutory duties. A programme of regular professional development to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and learning has been introduced for all staff. The staff who spoke with me said they value this training and are highly motivated to address the weaknesses identified in the inspection report and to secure lasting improvements.

Older pupils who met with me said they appreciate having an additional teacher now in the mornings, the new playground markings and the opportunity to enjoy regular music and art lessons. All pupils spoke confidently about how their teachers carefully mark their work in books and give them regular opportunities to respond to this using their 'purple pens'.

The local authority and diocese are working closely together to support the new leadership team, develop the role of middle leaders and check regularly on the work of the school. Together they are providing the guidance and additional resources necessary to secure lasting school improvements and the permanent leadership of the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's improvement plan is 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, the Director of Children's Services for Dorset and the Diocese of Salisbury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector