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Mrs Gill Deakin and Mrs Bryony Baynes
Acting Headteachers
The Fairfield Community Primary School
Carnforth Drive
Worcester
WR4 9HG

Dear Mrs Deakin and Mrs Baynes

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Fairfield Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 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 January 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the two acting headteachers, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. Records of pupils' progress and behaviour were considered. Records of lesson observations were also looked at. Classrooms and learning areas were visited.

Context

The substantive headteacher at the time of the inspection has resigned due to prolonged ill-health. Three other teachers left at the end of the spring term. The current deputy headteacher and the leaders of numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage are leaving at the end of the summer term. The contracts for 10 part-time teaching assistants are coming to an end in July. An experienced deputy headteacher has been appointed for September, along with a teacher responsible for

numeracy, a Reception class teacher who will take on the responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and an experienced teacher for the Nursery class. The local authority quickly arranged for a local authority school improvement adviser and a headteacher from another primary school to take on a shared, acting headteacher roles until a permanent solution to the school's leadership is determined. They will lead the school and drive the necessary improvements, following the section 5 inspection.

School leaders and local authority representatives are at an early stage of discussions with the Department for Education regarding sponsored academy status.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

As acting headteachers, you bring individual but complementary strengths to drive improvement. You both act firmly and quickly to provide determined and well-informed leadership for the school. You identify and challenge weak teaching where it exists and use the full powers available to you through performance management to take resolute action where teaching does not improve quickly enough. You are both careful to communicate your clear expectations and provide the necessary support where you have identified weaknesses. You speedily identified the need to improve the appearance, cleanliness and organisation of classrooms to engage pupils' interest and ensure their safety.

Governors have not responded quickly enough to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Governors remain dependent upon the information provided by school leaders, the local authority and the project board. They have not embarked on seeking their own, independent evidence to contribute strategically to the school's improvement or monitor progress. A review of governance is scheduled for this month.

You produced new policies regarding pupils' behaviour and attendance and ensured procedures for dealing with any incidents relating to these were adjusted and new routines established. You made sure everyone understood their responsibilities and how they would be held accountable for aspects of improvement. Your consistently communicated expectations have ensured that teachers take increasing responsibility for managing pupils' behaviour. Lessons are focused on learning and as a consequence, pupils respond well to the raised expectations of them. Minor misdemeanours are 'nipped in the bud' rather than allowed to escalate. Pupils want to learn, they are proud of the small steps they make in their achievement and they appreciate the encouragement they receive. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm, and consequently, pupils are able to listen, contribute and learn. Attendance and punctuality have improved and no pupil has been excluded since the last inspection.

The coordinator for pupils' special educational needs, with the support of the learning and teacher adviser, have identified pupils' needs, reviewed their support

and monitored their progress. The coordinator has helped to establish the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. She has rationalised the support provided by teaching assistants and ensured appropriate, targeted provision.

All those responsible for leading aspects of teaching regularly check teachers' effectiveness and report back to individual teachers and leaders about the relative strengths and areas for development. They make sure that development points are acted upon and provide support where needed. Leaders frequently visit classrooms to check teachers' lesson plans, the quality of written feedback, pupils' progress as seen in their books and the deployment of teaching assistants. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are not sufficiently accurate. You have arranged for assessments to be checked independently to ensure pupils' progress can be tracked with precision in the future.

The local authority remains responsive to the school's needs. The statement of action and the school improvement plan are combined to determine a cohesive route of planned development. The plans clearly identify the necessary action points against each of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. There are clear arrangements for monitoring the school's progress and evaluating how well the school is achieving its targets. Specific and relevant initiatives are included to strengthen teaching methods and managers' skills. The detail of generic and specific actions planned is impressive. Timescales are appropriate and suitably ambitious. Expectations and quantifiable outcomes are clearly established.

The school improvement adviser communicates clear expectations and provides on-going dialogue and tailored support. She visits the school every week and has helped middle leaders to develop the necessary skills to check on aspects of the school's work. In addition, she has monitored how well agreed activities are bringing about the necessary improvements. The local authority project board meets monthly with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and the school improvement adviser to evaluate how well you are progressing against the planned improvements.

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 appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The school may appoint a newly qualified teacher to the Year 5 class for September 2015. A suitable level of expertise will be available to support the teacher.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority
cc. The Secretary of State