

Ofsted
6th Floor
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

16 September 2015

David Aldworth
Interim Headteacher
Jakeman Nursery School
Jakeman Road
Balsall Heath
Birmingham
B12 9NX

Dear Mr Aldworth,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Jakeman Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 9 July 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 March 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and two local authority representatives. An additional telephone discussion was held with a local authority representative to discuss the local authority's statement of action. The school's action plan was evaluated. The school's website was examined, along with minutes of governing body meetings.

Context

In April 2015, an interim deputy headteacher was seconded from another school to work at Jakeman Nursery for three days each week. She has subsequently been appointed to this post until the end of August 2016. A teacher from a different

school has been appointed as an additional interim deputy headteacher. From September, she will coordinate the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and governors understand the fragility of the school's situation and have begun to tackle the most urgent issues. For example, you have ensured that there is now always at least one qualified teacher in the school at all times and have made arrangements for this number to increase. The interim deputy headteacher is providing good-quality teaching to the children in her care and is a good role model for other adults to follow.

Some improvements in the quality of teaching are apparent. Assessments of children's learning are beginning to more accurately reflect what children can do. During our brief visits to learning bases, some effective questioning was observed. For instance, an adult used questions well to help a group of children think and talk about insects and other minibeasts. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go before the quality of teaching is adequate. Most adults have recognised the need to change their practice in some way, but some are finding it hard to do so. You and your School Improvement Partner are giving them useful advice, but improvement in some cases is too slow. You have a view on how you will tackle this, but your plans have not been implemented at this stage.

You and the School Improvement Partner have devised an action plan to improve the quality of teaching and the learning environment in the school. However, this plan does not cover all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. It sets out how often you will observe teaching but does not show how the precise weaknesses in teaching will be addressed. Many of the 'actions' listed are, in fact, statements of what changes you hope to achieve and do not indicate what will be done, by whom and when. The action plan does not indicate the proposed timescale for particular improvements, so there is no way for governors to check whether progress is swift enough.

The local authority has prepared a statement of action to set out how it would support the school to improve. This statement of action does not state clearly what action the local authority proposes to take in light of the inspection report that resulted in special measures. The listed arrangements for informing parents about proposed actions and taking their views into account have not been followed through. Consequently, the statement of action does not meet the statutory requirements and requires amendment.

Governors have a clear understanding of the reasons why the school requires special measures and what needs to be done. Nevertheless, the governing body has many new members and some who have taken on new responsibilities, so processes for supporting and challenging school leaders are not defined. Some governors have now received training in keeping children safe and in protecting children from the dangers of being exposed to extremist views. Governors have not ensured that the school's website contains all the required information. The statement of action states that the school's website will be used as a key mechanism for communicating with parents. However, the site is currently not fit for this purpose.

Relationships between some parents and the school remain strained. Some parents feel leaders and governors have not communicated effectively with parents about the reasons why changes have been made. Governors are aware of the need to keep parents appropriately informed about staff changes, while respecting the confidentiality of individuals concerned. Given the large number of changes that have been required in a short period of time, this is proving to be a difficult balance to strike.

The local authority has worked closely with the school during this turbulent period. You value the timely and helpful support for dealing with staffing issues. During the course of this visit, the local authority confirmed that it intends to apply to the Secretary of State for permission to remove delegated powers from the governing body and to replace it with an interim executive board. The interim executive board will have the authority to make such decisions as are necessary to ensure the school rapidly improves.

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 Birmingham local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Cc: For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
Director of Children's Services for Birmingham local authority:
peter.hay@birmingham.gov.uk
Chair of Governors: [Lesley Wiltshire](#)