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28 June 2018

Mrs Laura Ciftci  
Headteacher  
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Essex  
CM19 4PH

Dear Mrs Ciftci

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Jerounds Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school with Deborah Estcourt, Ofsted Inspector, on 19 to 20 June 2018, 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 that you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2017.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Randall

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017.**

#### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- As a matter of urgency, improve child protection procedures and policies so that they are fit for purpose by ensuring that:
  - an effective chronology is kept when there are multiple concerns about an individual pupil
  - there is a clear timeline from the point a concern is raised through to its resolution, demonstrating leaders' prompt response and ongoing monitoring of concerns
  - all child protection records are kept in good order and robustly followed through to a satisfactory conclusion
  - leaders regularly review and monitor the impact of their child protection systems in line with statutory guidance
  - governors hold leaders rigorously to account for the welfare of all pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of protection.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - leaders evaluating the school's performance through the robust analysis of a range of information, including of the progress different groups of pupils make
  - ensuring that performance management for staff is rigorous, systematic and effective
  - providing training for governors so that the governing body is better able to hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good throughout the school, and in the early years, by:
  - ensuring that teachers make use of the school's assessment system to plan learning activities that are suited to the needs and abilities of pupils in their class
  - ensuring that teachers enable pupils to make the progress they are capable of by using time, other adults and resources appropriately in lessons.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - accelerating the progress pupils make in lower key stage 2, especially the most able
  - ensuring that standards at the end of key stage 2 improve because pupils make good progress from their starting points.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19 June 2018 to 20 June 2018**

### **Evidence**

We observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, senior leaders, staff, lead practitioners from the academy trust and two members of the interim executive board (IEB). I also met with the standards and excellence commissioner, who represents the local authority and advises the IEB. We checked the school's single central record of vetting checks on staff and met the designated lead for safeguarding. We observed pupils' learning with senior leaders and reviewed the work in pupils' books. Inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and informally to discuss their learning and their views of the school. We also observed pupils' conduct in the playground and in the lunch hall.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher has left the school. An interim headteacher was in place for about six months, prior to you taking up your post as acting headteacher in September 2017. Three members of staff, some new to the school, have been promoted to the senior leadership team, and several teachers have left and joined the school following the inspection in March 2017. Following a review of governance, an IEB was set up to replace the local governing body and to monitor improvement. The IEB and local authority expected the school to become an academy on 1 March 2018. Although this did not take place, plans for academy conversion are progressing well. The proposed date is now 1 July 2018.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Owing to changes to the school's leadership, the school's improvement following the original judgement was slow. However, since your appointment in September 2017, this has accelerated. On arrival, you inherited a school with a divided staff, a significant in-year budget deficit and a parent group who felt marginalised. Additionally, the published results showed that pupils' progress in Year 6 for reading and mathematics was significantly below the national average. Your strong and purposeful leadership is galvanising staff, raising expectations and transforming the culture of the school. Other senior leaders share your ambitious vision for the school, and, in a relatively short space of time, are bringing about telling improvements in their own areas of responsibility. Many staff spoke about how they now feel empowered to do their job because of the trust and autonomy you give them. You know the areas that need to be better and you rightly prioritised those that needed the most urgent attention. You have the full support of your staff and the IEB to make the necessary improvements.

An external review of governance found key weaknesses in the quality of the

school's leadership and governance. This led to the removal of the governing body, and replacement with an IEB, which knows what needs to be done to improve the school, and provides you with useful support and effective challenge. The members of the IEB have focused on strengthening leadership capacity and providing you with the additional resources to make the necessary improvements. Crucially, you have quickly addressed the shortfalls in safeguarding and child protection processes, stabilised the budget, restructured staffing and overseen the conversion towards academy status.

You have also improved behaviour, changed the curriculum, and are improving teaching and learning. However, you acknowledge that there is still much work to do before pupils make good progress in all subjects and across all year groups. Your statement of action lists your main priorities and links closely to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. You have faith in the capacity of your senior leaders to drive improvements. Some of them are new to senior leadership, but you and the IEB know the importance of showing that they can deliver and sustain these improvements promptly.

Previously, leaders did not hold staff to account for the impact of their work, including the progress that pupils make. One long-term employee told me that he had received two interviews to discuss his performance, one since your arrival, and the other to cover his previous 15 years at the school. You have ensured that this is no longer the case, and have introduced an effective system to manage staff performance. You also monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely, and your teaching profiles give you an accurate reflection of where pupils learn most over time. Teachers are held accountable for the progress that pupils in their care make, and you identify underachievement quickly so that teachers are helped to improve their practice. While this is improving the quality of pupils' learning, there is still a long way to go to remove the school from special measures.

Since January, the new acting special educational needs (SEN) coordinator has completely reviewed the school's processes for assessing need and planning provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. An increased number of pupils now have a diagnosis of need, enabling them to access the support that they need, often through a new education, health and care plan. The SEN coordinator has established closer links with external agencies, and has trained staff better so that they fully understand the needs of vulnerable pupils. Learning support assistants, who help pupils in the classroom or provide one-to-one 'precision teaching', are now tracking pupils' progress towards their targets more precisely. Leaders have taken significant steps forward in their provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, as they know, these are too recent to have brought about sustained improvements in pupils' achievement as yet.

The headteacher, well supported by her senior leaders, is broadening the curriculum through reorganising learning time, and providing a broader range of stimulating enrichment activities. Displays around the school highlight some of the extra-

curricular activities that pupils benefit from, as seen from their high-quality diary entries recording their time on a residential trip to north Norfolk. Parents, pupils and staff all acknowledge the growth in sporting activities, pre-school and after-school clubs, and community events. Parents highlighted the art club, the SATs preparation breakfast and the Christmas Carol service as worthy of special mention.

Of the parents I met, most said that they had been unsettled by events at the school, and were originally anxious about some of your plans, including conversion to academy status. However, through good communication, and the positive impact that they have seen on their own children, they feel very reassured. One said: 'The headteacher's decisions have been spot on and some of the staffing replacements have been brilliant.' They realise that the school needed to change, and they feel it is now better all round. For example, they highlight the quicker diagnoses for pupils with special needs, the increased availability of senior leaders, the vastly improved extra-curricular programme, and the support provided to the school by the academy trust. They would still like greater continuity for their children in some areas and hope that staffing is now stable.

Leaders make sure that pupils feel safe and are kept safe in school. All of the necessary vetting checks are carried out to ensure that adults are suitable to work in the school. All staff receive appropriate training and understand their duties to safeguard pupils, including how to spot any signs that may indicate pupils are potentially at risk. Pupils are taught how to spot potential dangers and to take actions to mitigate any risks to their safety.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Since your appointment, you have prioritised raising the expectations of staff and pupils and making staff increasingly accountable for pupils' progress. You brought in a new policy in January to focus on pupils' behaviour. Consequently, there has been less impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and there is still too much inconsistency. Where practice is most effective, teachers plan a variety of activities and use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge and vocabulary. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and pupils are given the opportunities to edit and redraft their work. Pupils feel that they learn better because the work is harder. They said that they now cover concepts in greater detail, so that they remember how to do things more easily. However, pupils' books show that the quality and presentation of their work is still variable. For example, our scrutiny of English books revealed a noticeable difference in the quality of extended writing between different year groups. There are clearly some legacy issues that you are starting to address. You point out that staff have benefited from the input from lead practitioners from the trust, and there are plans in place to extend this support following conversion to academy status.

Children in the early years are happy, work well together and confidently engage in conversation. They are enthusiastic, interested learners who are developing their

sense of number and can add single digits together. Their writing shows good letter formation, a clear understanding of sentence structure, and we saw some wonderful extended writing. We noted a good blend of adult-led activities and child-initiated learning. Parents are kept informed of their child's development through the online learning journals. You continue to develop the outdoor areas so that children have the opportunity to develop numeracy and literacy skills across all areas of learning.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

During the inspection, we noted that pupils were well behaved, pleasant to each other and courteous. In lessons, pupils mostly listen well and show good concentration skills. Pupils say that behaviour has improved since January. They feel that the new system is simpler and that teachers apply it more consistently. They like the reward points, and say that the new behaviour ladders promote good habits. We did notice that some pupils lose focus when the learning is not matched precisely enough to their needs.

Your new arrangements to avoid excluding pupils from school are working well. This includes ensuring that pupils with particular needs receive the support that they need to help them access learning more effectively. No pupils have been permanently excluded under your leadership, and the proportion of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly. Attendance is now slightly above the national average because you have tightened up the processes for checking absences and you intervene quickly where issues emerge. Your work to tackle the persistent absence of pupils is showing a positive impact.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The unresolved inconsistencies in teaching and learning mean that pupils' progress across different year groups still varies. Some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan learning that meets different pupils' needs effectively. When asked, pupils said that they are making better progress this year, but could still achieve more if they were pushed a little harder. They feel that while behaviour has improved, there are still occasions when their learning is disrupted by others.

Your self-evaluation and inspection findings confirm that pupils' progress in mathematics and English is lower than that expected nationally. This is because there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. In some mathematics lessons, there is too much focus on repeated practice and insufficient development of pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. In some English lessons, pupils still have misconceptions linked to tense and syntax. While we did see some very good examples of extended writing, notably in Year 2, Year 6 and the early years, some pupils, particularly in Year 5, do not structure their writing well enough or produce quality work when writing at length.

You provide a range of booster classes and interventions to support individual pupils, especially those in Year 2 and Year 6. This has helped to prepare them better for their SATS examinations. You and your senior team are aware that results will dip quite markedly in some areas. However, through closer monitoring and better triangulation, you are now entirely confident that these give you a clear benchmark of where you are in terms of pupils' progress. They also give you an accurate baseline against which to measure future improvements. You know that you have to remove the inconsistencies in teaching and learning before progress across year groups and subjects is securely good.

### **External support**

The IEB provides a careful balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. Board members bring a range of essential experience and desirable skills to their roles. They continue to liaise closely with the local authority to ensure that the school transitions smoothly to academy status. The IEB, often through the trust, provides a range of external support to assist staff, and to monitor and evaluate their impact against your improvement plans.