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Mrs Sharon Byrne
Kingsway Community Primary School
Baker Avenue
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV31 3HB

Dear Mrs Byrne

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kingsway Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 and 19 September 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 you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that 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 that took place in June 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 action 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 chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2017

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - establishing a strong and sustained leadership team who have the skills and commitment to bring about the necessary improvements in all areas of school life
 - developing a clear, strategic direction for the school that guides and supports staff in improving teaching and outcomes for pupils
 - implementing rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation that accurately identify the school's most pressing priorities for improvement
 - drawing up a long-term improvement plan for the school that has well-defined and demanding actions, timescales and success criteria
 - ensuring that a robust and accurate system of assessment is established and embedded, and that leaders use the information gathered by teachers to monitor and evaluate the progress of all groups of pupils
 - setting teachers challenging performance targets and providing appropriate support and professional development opportunities so that they can improve their teaching
 - ensuring that the additional funding available to the school, including the pupil premium grant and special educational needs funding, is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - working effectively with parents and carers to improve attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - developing robust systems to record, monitor and improve any inappropriate behaviour
 - ensuring that the governing body holds leaders to account robustly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all is at least good, and thereby improve outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers are accurate in their assessments and use the information available to them to match learning to the different abilities of pupils
 - ensuring that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils, and set tasks that are

appropriately matched to individual pupils' needs

- developing pupils' mathematical abilities by providing opportunities for them to apply their computational skills in problem solving using reasoning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - further developing the range of reading activities that pupils undertake and providing a wider choice of books that appeal to different ages, abilities and interests
 - developing teachers' and other adults' skills in the use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning
 - ensuring that all teachers accurately identify how pupils can improve their understanding of grammar and punctuation, and provide clear guidance to pupils on how to apply this in their writing.
- Improve outcomes for children in the early years so that more achieve a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception classes by:
- establishing strong leadership of the early years provision with a clear understanding of how young children learn and develop
 - ensuring that assessment systems are developed and used appropriately to gain a clear understanding of each child's skills and abilities on entry to the early years, and to accurately measure their progress across the Reception Year
 - improving teachers' and other adults' skills in extending and enriching children's communication and language development
 - improving the quality of the outdoor classroom to support children's independent and investigative learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils by ensuring that all staff respond appropriately and quickly to the inappropriate behaviour of the minority of pupils who do not adhere to the school's behaviour expectations.

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

It is strongly recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 18 to 19 September 2018

Evidence

Meetings were held throughout the two days with both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspector met with five representatives of the governing body including the chair of the governing body and vice-chair. The inspector held telephone conversations with the local authority learning improvement adviser and the chair of the task group.

The inspector observed pupils working across the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied the inspector for most of the visits. The inspector looked at pupils' work, spoke to them about their learning and observed behaviour in lessons. The inspector met formally with a group of pupils and observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime.

In addition, the inspector spoke with parents on the playground at the start of the school day. The inspector looked at various school documents, reports from external advisers and the school's website. The single central record of the checks on staff's suitability to work with children was also scrutinised.

Due to the large number of areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, the inspector did not examine every one in detail on this first monitoring visit. The inspector did not focus specifically on pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, observe phonics teaching or specifically hear pupils read.

Context

Since the last inspection in June 2017, there have been significant staffing changes. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2017, a deputy headteacher in January 2018 and two phase leaders in June 2018. Ten teachers have left the school and three new teachers joined in September 2018. Pupil numbers in the school have risen from 175, at the time of the last inspection, to 204 currently.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Strong leadership has halted the decline in the quality of education offered at Kingsway Community Primary School. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, significant improvements have taken place. The school is being transformed. From the outset, the headteacher made clear what was expected from each and every member of staff. She ensures that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. She holds staff to account through a newly implemented, rigorous performance management process. The headteacher works continually to secure a commitment to high standards so that the school is a place 'where the next generation of our community learns to thrive'. This vision is now shared by all staff.

A strong, dynamic partnership exists between the headteacher and the new deputy headteacher. Together, they share a comprehensive understanding of the key areas for development. They know exactly where improvement is needed and use a rapid action plan to drive their work. Regular monitoring is now in place. This enables leaders to reflect on the actions taken and improvements made. A longer-term plan should now be developed to secure the long-term future of the school and ensure that the improvements made are sustainable over time.

The headteacher works to empower and develop other leaders across the school so that there is distributed leadership. Recently appointed phase leaders have been quick to rise to the challenges set for them. They oversee the work of their phase and are beginning to check to make sure that actions are leading to higher standards in the classroom. Subject leaders are also able to monitor pupils' work in books and see how effectively their subject is being taught. This work is still in the early stages and the impact of the new middle leaders is yet to be realised.

As a direct result of the involvement of the headteacher, the early years foundation stage has been transformed. A clear vision for high standards in this area has been established. Provision has been improved, although there is still more to develop, particularly outside, to ensure that children's needs are fully met. A secure baseline is in place and more is expected of pupils and staff. Children develop greater independence in their learning from the outset, because they are helped to develop key skills, knowledge and understanding. Opportunities for further challenge are not yet routinely embedded. Leadership of the early years continues to require improvement as, still, too much responsibility rests with the headteacher.

Information about how well pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics is increasingly accurate. A systematic approach to assessment, including regular pupil progress meetings, enables leaders to hold teachers to account for the standards achieved by the pupils in their class. More can still be done to check the performance of pupils in greater detail, to ensure rapid progress is made.

Leaders demonstrate a passion and commitment to ensuring that the curriculum is engaging and relevant to pupils. A new curriculum is being embedded across the school. During the inspection, a broad range of subjects was observed, including science, geography, design and technology, religious education and music. Pupils work hard because they are interested and enjoy the learning activities.

In February 2018, the school commissioned a review of the use and impact of the pupil premium spending. Leaders are now better able to track the funding and the difference it is making to disadvantaged pupils. All staff are aware of this key group of pupils and ensure a focus on them in the classroom. Staff are more focused in their questioning and ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive specific feedback on their work. Leaders have acted upon many of the recommendations made in the review, although they recognise that there is still more work to be done to ensure that standards rise rapidly for this group.

The governing body, formed in November 2017 after the last inspection, is now a strength of the school. Led by a skilled and knowledgeable chair, governors demonstrate a commitment to the job in hand. They use their skills effectively to challenge and support leaders in equal measure. Governors fully understand their role to hold leaders to account. Governors use their skills and knowledge to interrogate assessment information. They are determined to see standards rise for all pupils. The recent creation of two subcommittees will enable governors to develop their work further and look in greater detail at specific aspects of the school's performance. Governors share the collective vision and are very much part of the team driving improvements.

Relationships with parents continue to improve. More parents attend school events such as open evenings and information sessions, such as those focused on phonics. The majority of parents who spoke to the inspector have confidence in the new leadership team and could see significant positive changes. They recognise the current journey of improvement. Some parents would welcome further information about how the school is progressing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

In the past, expectations of what pupils can do have been too low. An excuse culture pervaded the school. Pupils were not challenged to reach the highest standards possible. This is now changing. Leaders set out clear guidelines and expectations for teachers. Teaching sequences build on prior learning. Accurate assessment and feedback to pupils are built into the planning cycle. Teachers use the new approach to feedback more consistently. As a result, more pupils know what their next steps are. Leaders coach and work alongside staff to ensure assessments are accurate. They lead by example. They are developing a can-do philosophy with all staff.

While assessments are now more accurate, not all work is matched appropriately to meet pupils' needs. Sometimes, teachers struggle to pitch work closely enough to support pupils who need extra help or to move most-able pupils on quickly enough to harder work. For example, during the inspection, some pupils were expected to read instructions and use resources that were beyond their skills and knowledge at that point in time. This slows pupils' progress.

High expectations from all staff are not yet consistently in place. Pupils' books show that sometimes not all teachers expect the highest standards. Basic errors, including those in spelling, grammar and punctuation, go unchecked. Misunderstandings continue and so the gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding remain. Leaders, including phase leaders, are checking pupils' books more regularly. They work with new teachers to ensure that high standards become embedded.

The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school. New resources support pupils in developing their knowledge. Where pupils have the opportunity to use

practical apparatus, they secure their understanding more quickly. However, not all teachers ensure that this is an integral part of their teaching. Opportunities for pupils to reason and explain are becoming more frequent and purposeful. Evidence in pupils' books shows a broad mathematics curriculum emerging.

A love of reading is being developed. A new library is in the process of being established and new books purchased. In order to introduce pupils to a wide range of books, teachers read to their class daily. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite author and describe stories they love. Even the very youngest children share books and retell stories to one another.

As a result of training and coaching, many staff are now extremely skilled in asking effective questions which help pupils deepen their understanding. They encourage pupils to think critically and make links with what they already know. These teachers probe, give pupils time to think before responding and develop confidence in children so they are brave enough to have a go. Leaders know there is further work to do to ensure that there is high-quality, effective questioning from every adult.

In the early years, adults demonstrate effective skills in developing children's language and communication. There is no dumbing down of the language used with the children. Rather, adults use high-quality vocabulary and model language clearly. This enables children to copy and practise new words and phrases. Children are beginning to express themselves more clearly.

Leaders set the standard for the learning environment. Resources and classrooms are now tidy and well organised. A science teaching room and a computer suite support the delivery of a broad, balanced curriculum. A deep sense of pride is beginning to permeate the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

A new behaviour system has been established, which has transformed behaviour across the school. Clear guidelines and procedures are now in place for recording and reporting any behaviour issue. Training for all staff ensures that they fully understand how to implement the new system. They now use it consistently. Information about the new approach was shared with pupils and parents. Pupils talk enthusiastically about staying green or getting a blue card, giving them time to think about their behaviour. They understand the consequences for making the wrong choice and behaving badly. Any behaviour issue is quickly followed up by a senior leader. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of behaviour incidents.

During the inspection, the school was a calm and orderly community. The vast majority of pupils conducted themselves well throughout the day. Lessons are rarely disturbed by unacceptable behaviour. Staff say this is a dramatic change from how

the school used to be. Staff say they now feel empowered to deal with behaviour because of the support of leaders. Pupils with specific behavioural difficulties are supported effectively. This support helps prevent challenging behaviour from escalating.

Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. However, when teachers do not match work carefully to meet pupils' needs and abilities some pupils begin to fidget and lose concentration. Where the curriculum is more interesting and appropriate, more pupils show greater motivation to concentrate and try hard. Many pupils were eager to share their work with the inspector. They are beginning to develop greater pride in all aspects of their work and behaviour. Pupils now need reminding and encouraging to challenge themselves, in order to reach the highest standards possible.

Attendance over the last year was 95%. It has remained below the national average. Leaders have put appropriate strategies in place to monitor and tackle poor attendance. They meet parents to discuss attendance matters, phone home when a pupil does not arrive at school and follow this up with a home visit if they are still concerned. Leaders are rightly concerned about the number of pupils who arrive late for school. Leaders know that, over time, these pupils miss too much of their learning time. As a result, this group of pupils make less progress than those who regularly arrive on time. A new signing-in system has been put in place this term to monitor the reasons why some pupils are more often late. Leaders intend to use this information to find way to support families to get their children to school on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and 2 remain too low. In 2018, key stage 1 results were lower than those achieved in 2017. At key stage 2, however, test results in reading and writing rose slightly in 2018 while mathematics remained the same. There was a drop in the number of pupils reaching the expected levels in grammar, punctuation and spelling and in science. Despite some rises, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 continue to be significantly lower than national averages. In 2018 only 21% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of low expectations and poor teaching over time. Leaders are now halting the decline in standards.

The progress pupils make is still too slow. Although the progress of pupils currently in the school is better, the majority of pupils have a lot of catching up to do. They have gaps in their knowledge and skills which need to be rapidly addressed. To date, these gaps are not being closed quickly enough. Pupils continue to be at risk of not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of

Year 1 has not significantly changed over the last three years. It remains below national averages. Leaders carried out a thorough scrutiny of the data. They looked at the reasons why pupils are not reaching the expected standard. A comprehensive phonics teaching and assessment cycle has now been established. Leaders identify pupils not making sufficient progress more quickly. They make sure they get the help they need to catch up. Leaders anticipate that the numbers of pupils reaching the expected standard will rise at the end of this academic year.

Over the last three years, there has been an upward trend in the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years foundation stage. As a result of significant positive change and higher expectations, outcomes in the early years reached national averages in July 2018. Although it is early days, this looks set to be built upon during this academic year. A clear baseline has been established for the current cohort of children. This indicates that they have skills that are broadly typical for their age. The teacher is already identifying those who will require additional support in order to reach age-related expectations next summer.

External support

A range of support has been provided by the local authority. Through regular task-group meetings, leaders have been held to account. However, several changes in the role of chair of the task group have limited the progress and oversight of school improvement. The new chair, while recognising the transformation in leadership in the school, is fully aware of the need to increase rates of progress rapidly for most pupils. The learning improvement officer knows the school well. Regular visits and coaching for the new headteacher and other leaders are supporting the development of strong leadership at all levels.