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17 January 2014

Mr Andrew Denton
Headteacher
Leamore Primary School
Bloxwich Road
Walsall
WS3 2BB

Dear Mr Denton

Special measures monitoring inspection of Leamore Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 January, 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 October 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and two staff governors and a representative from the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection in October 2013 the Year 3 teacher has moved into Year 1, a teacher has returned from long-term sick leave and three teaching assistants have been appointed, one in Year 6 and two in Early Years Foundation Stage. Two parent governors have resigned and two new ones have been appointed. A local authority governor has resigned.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and the deputy headteacher have an accurate understanding of the scale of the challenges facing the school and are beginning to address them with an appropriate level of urgency and determination.

The school's post-inspection action plan is tightly focused on the key areas for improvement. The short-term timescales are realistic yet challenging. However, the plan does not contain sufficient detail about the actions that will be taken in the longer term and the roles and responsibilities of all leaders.

Your initial actions have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from training from senior leaders and external consultants and have observed good and outstanding practice in other local schools and nursery settings. Where teaching remains inadequate, an appropriate level of support is in place. Early monitoring evidence indicates that teachers are beginning to transfer newly acquired skills into their daily classroom practice. Appropriate support is in place for the four newly qualified teachers. School leaders and governors are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring that effective and regularly reviewed support continues to be provided to these teachers new to the profession.

Your monitoring timetable is precisely focused to ensure checks are being made on whether the training teachers are receiving is being embedded in their classroom practice. The feedback provided to teachers after monitoring activities is clear and precise. This is helping teachers to know exactly what needs to be done to improve the quality of their teaching.

The review of governance, which was recommended in the inspection report, has not yet been completed and this should be organised as a matter of urgency. The actions taken as a result of the review will be scrutinised at the next monitoring inspection. Governors are committed to playing their part in improving the school and have plans in place to visit the school more regularly to find out for themselves how the school is progressing. They have a clearer and more accurate picture of the challenges facing the school. They have begun to ask more challenging questions of the school leaders, but are aware that there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding, particularly with regard to information about pupils' progress. Governors have plans in place to ensure that parents and carers are kept fully informed of all developments.

Local authority support has been too slow to make an accurate diagnosis of what will support the school's leaders to make rapid and sustained improvements. There has been insufficient clarity in how the local authority will directly support the school or facilitate support through brokering additional external agencies. While an offer of

flexible support related to the changing needs of the school has been offered in the statement of action, the local authority has not acted sufficiently decisively and is too reliant on the school leaders requesting support. A local nursery practitioner's support has been brokered and improvements in the learning environment and provision for independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved as a result.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose, however it needs to be strengthened by:

- including the precise actions that will be taken by local authority advisors to support the improvement of the school
- including more detailed timescales regarding the visits to be made by local authority officers and advisors, reflecting the rapid rate of improvement required.

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 Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Howie
Her Majesty's Inspector