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Mr Neil McDonough
The Headteacher
Weyfield Academy
School Close
Off Woking Road
Guildford
GU1 1QJ

Dear Mr McDonough

Special measures monitoring inspection of Weyfield Academy

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 2014, 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 September 2014.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the academy sponsor. I toured the school, visiting all the classrooms. I evaluated the school's action plans, and examined other documents including governing body records, the school's records of checks on teaching and information about pupils' progress.

Context

A teacher left in October and another will leave at Christmas; both vacancies have been filled. A maternity leave started recently, covered by existing staff.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since the inspection you have led with purpose and clarity, ably supported by the deputy headteacher. You have set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and

achievement, and for staff performance. You are putting into place well-considered systems and structures to support rapid improvement in all these areas.

In every classroom, I saw pupils purposefully engaged in their learning, focused on completing tasks and taking care to present work well. Those I met around the school were polite and considerate. I was impressed to see the disciplined way classes walk from room to room, quietly, and in well-ordered lines. This included the youngest children on their way to the lunch hall.

You have set ambitious targets for each pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year, aiming rapidly to close the gap between what pupils in the school attain currently, and national expectations at ages 7 and 11. New, regular meetings between teachers and senior leaders review pupils' progress in detail and identify groups or individuals at risk of underachieving. Helpfully, these discussions also consider how well teachers are making improvements in the areas identified by the inspection.

You and the deputy headteacher check teaching regularly and systematically, including rigorous scrutiny of work in pupils' books and information about their progress. Your thorough observation schedule includes checks on newly-introduced sessions for teaching reading to groups of pupils. The feedback you provide identifies specific improvements, which you look to see on the following visit. You check teachers' marking carefully. The marking I saw was well presented and increasingly helpful. You have ensured that, each week, pupils have enough time to consider and respond to this feedback.

Importantly, you have restructured the curriculum to ensure daily teaching of mathematics and English, with regular teaching of reading. You have introduced teaching about letters and the sounds they make (phonics) into the Reception class, at a much earlier stage. New books and resources for teaching reading have been introduced, and inviting reading areas are established in all the classrooms, some with creative themes. You have already received positive feedback from parents about children's new enthusiasm for books and for reading at home. In their writing, pupils are responding well to raised expectations and the systematic teaching and assessment you have introduced. Work on display shows rapid progress for many pupils since half term. You are wisely developing the wider curriculum to ensure sufficient opportunities for pupils to rehearse and extend these core skills.

These early signs of improvement are less evident in the Reception class. Although some changes have been made to the indoor learning environment, on the day of the visit there was no sign of any development outdoors.

You are taking logical steps to build leadership capacity, at all levels. Training and coaching are beginning to equip senior and middle leaders to lead learning

effectively in their areas of responsibility. Mathematics and English leaders have developed relevant action plans, linked to the school's overall improvement planning. In mathematics, urgent work is in hand to provide guidance for teachers, to ensure a step-by-step approach to pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills. A similar action plan has not been developed for early years provision.

Immediately after the inspection you drafted a concise action plan, focused directly on the areas for improvement identified in the report. Your decision now, to combine this plan with the wider school improvement plan and to incorporate any actions arising from the recent review of how the school uses its pupil premium resources (additional government funding for pupils receiving free school meals or who are looked after), is sensible.

The Chair of the Governing Body continues to lead with clarity and vigour. New members with relevant skills have joined, and a suitable programme of induction and training is in place. Named governors have been assigned to check specific areas of the school's improvement, but not yet for early years provision. Appropriately, to support decisions about next steps, the review of governance is being arranged to tie in with governors' evaluation of their action plan in the New Year.

External support

The academy sponsor has ensured timely, practical support for leaders, teachers and the governing body. Importantly, the sponsor's action plan ties in well with the school's plans, and ensures clear separation between support for the school and checks on its improvement. The current document does not set this information out in enough detail, with clear timescales, but this is in hand.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plans are fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Surrey and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton
Her Majesty's Inspector