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Ruth McNeil
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McNeil

Special measures monitoring inspection of Landau Forte Academy Moorhead

Following my visit with Helen Williams, Ofsted Inspector (OI) to your school on 30 November and 1 December 2021, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Landau Forte multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 30 November and 1 December 2021

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic and changes to staffing have continued to present challenges to senior leaders to maintain the speed of improvement at the school since the first monitoring inspection. For example, children in the Reception Year and pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have experienced significant periods of time when they were unable to access learning on the school premises. Remote education was provided for these pupils during this time. There has been significant staff absence. This has caused further disruption to pupils' education.

Senior leaders have needed to make a number of appointments. Five new members of teaching staff, an assistant headteacher and a leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have been appointed since the first monitoring inspection in May 2021.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders are remaining resolute in their determination to improve the quality of education. They are ensuring that the shared values of 'dream, believe and achieve' are becoming embedded across the school. Staff talk about 'positivity dripping off the walls' as they continue to drive and improve the key aspects of the school's provision.

In mathematics, the leader has a better understanding of the subject's strengths and development areas. Teachers are consistently following the curriculum plans that have been put in place. They are using extra resources to support some pupils, which help them to understand the intended learning more clearly. They are assessing pupils when they complete units of work. These assessments, along with recap sessions, help teachers to identify the pupils who require extra help. They are successfully challenging those pupils who were finding the mathematical content too easy. The remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge are focused mainly on their understanding and skills in calculating the four rules of number.

The teaching of phonics is also continuing to improve. Staff have received effective training. They are delivering the phonics programme consistently from the early years through to key stage 1. There are frequent checks made on the quality of the phonics sessions. Staff appreciate this feedback and say that it is helping them to improve their practice. Pupils are reading books that more closely match the phonic sounds they are learning. They are encouraged to read at home and are rewarded for doing so. Pupils use the phonic skills they have been taught to help decode any unfamiliar words. Leaders understand that time is needed for these improvements to 'fully bear fruit', as the pupils move into key stage 2.

Children in the early years are now receiving an improved curriculum offer. The curriculum they receive is planned out and thought through with greater clarity. The early years leader is clear about the key knowledge that children need to learn. For example, a group of children were observed successfully adding one more on to different numbers up to five. They were using appropriate resources to help them. Staff use assessment wisely. It is not too time-consuming. Staff use this information to help plan for children's next steps. Relationships between children and staff are warm and positive. There are well-established routines in place. Links have been made with other settings. These enable staff to share and to learn from the effective practice of others.

Improvements in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are at an early stage. Nevertheless, pupils are now receiving better support in class. The plans that detail pupils' targets have improved. Pupils are completing work which is becoming better matched to meeting their needs. However, there has not yet been time for the leader to fully monitor the impact of this work. Leaders understand that there is still some way to go for this practice to become embedded.

The school's curriculum is improving. However, leaders recognise that there is still some work to do to fully plan out the different curriculum subjects. In science, for example, it is unclear exactly what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. This means that pupils are unable to acquire and build their knowledge in science in a systematic way. This is limiting pupils' opportunities to be able to gain an understanding of scientific vocabulary and knowledge appropriate to their age. In other subjects, such as design and technology, geography and art, the curriculum plans were only introduced in September 2021. Consequently, leaders have not yet been able to evaluate their effectiveness. It is unclear in these subjects if all the planned content can be taught in the time available during the academic year. The impact of these new curriculums, therefore, remains unknown.

Some staff and pupils have raised concerns regarding pupils' behaviour. There are significant instances of poor behaviour that disrupt the learning of other pupils. Inspectors witnessed some low-level disruption, incidents of pupils showing poor self-control, a lack of respect for adults, including arguing back, and a failure to follow instructions. Some pupils told inspectors they did not always feel safe. Leaders are aware of these issues and are seeking support from outside agencies where necessary.

Leaders are committed to improving pupils' personal development. Staff provide pupils with a broader range of learning opportunities. There are strong links with the local police. This link allows pupils to understand the role of the police in their community. Pupils are enjoying the chance to learn outdoors and to develop their self-confidence through team-building activities. Pupils have recently been successful in competing in a bicycle race. They have learned about the importance of recycling. They have visited a local theatre and had the opportunity to develop their talent and interest in music. Pupils are beginning to be better prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 recently visited a Gurdwara. This was to support pupils in learning about tolerance and

respect. One pupil said: 'Some people don't understand that we are all different, but we should be treated the same.'

Staff describe leaders as having an 'open door policy'. They told inspectors that leaders are sensitive to their workload and to their well-being. Staff appreciate the training opportunities that are provided for them.

The education academy committee now acts as the school's governing body. The membership of the committee has a wide range of skills and experience that is being used to both support and challenge senior leaders. For instance, leaders have welcomed the committee's support and guidance about the teaching of phonics and early reading. Minutes from recent committee meetings show that its members are asking leaders relevant questions. This is helping to ensure that leaders are being held fully to account for their actions.

Additional support

The multi-academy trust has provided the school with financial support. This has been effective in regard to providing a variety of effective training opportunities for staff, funding for additional teachers to support pupils' learning, and the purchasing of electronic devices for pupils, so they can learn remotely. The chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer meet frequently with the headteacher to discuss the improvement priorities. The trust is aware that at this point in the school's improvement journey, leaders now require bespoke support to ensure the school's curriculum is well planned, sequenced and embedded across the school.

Evidence

The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with: the headteacher; the deputy headteacher; other senior leaders; the multi-academy trust chief executive officer; the deputy chief executive officer; two members of the education academy committee, including the chair; pupils; and staff. The responses to Ofsted's staff and parent questionnaires were taken into consideration.