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Kate Coates
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Coates

Special measures monitoring inspection of Burrowmoor Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on the 8 and 9 November 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in June 2022.

During the inspection, Karen Stanton, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, including the interim chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also scrutinised a range of documents, including safeguarding records, visited lessons, observed breaktimes and met with staff and pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Burrowmoor Primary School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous section 5 inspection, the trust has restructured the leadership of the school to increase capacity for improvement and clarify roles and responsibilities. You

have increased the support you provide as executive headteacher. An interim head of school took up her position in September 2022. The interim executive board has been reconstituted to increase its expertise and the challenge it provides by including leaders from two other multi-academy trusts. The new board is beginning its work to support and challenge you and other school leaders. You understand the need to secure rapid improvements. Working with the interim executive board and the restructured leadership team, you are starting to tackle methodically the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

You and school leaders have acted swiftly to begin to address weaknesses in the quality of education. You have prioritised improving the curriculum and the teaching of reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Leaders have introduced a well-sequenced approach to teaching phonics and provided relevant training for staff. Teachers now have a better understanding of how to teach and build pupils' phonics knowledge. However, there is still further training required to ensure that reading is taught consistently and well. Additional support from an experienced reading leader at another multi-academy trust school is helping teachers to implement this new approach consistently. Leaders are ensuring that the teaching of reading is being appropriately resourced. The number of books that are matched to the sounds pupils are learning has been increased. More books are due to be purchased. Extra help for pupils who need it is in place to give them more practice.

The PSHE curriculum has been revised to incorporate more detailed guidance for teachers. Pupils now benefit from regular PSHE lessons. Sequences of learning on developing relationships and appreciating differences have been prioritised within the school year. This curriculum is at the early stages of being put in place. Leaders recognise that there is more work needed to develop a tolerant and inclusive culture across the school.

In mathematics, leaders have put clear plans in place based on the national curriculum. They have introduced assessments so that teachers can identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and adjust lessons when required. Training is improving teachers' understanding of what pupils should be able to do and of how to plan the small steps of learning that will help pupils to build their knowledge over time. Teachers are making better use of resources to help pupils to understand tricky new concepts.

A senior leader has responsibility for improving behaviour. However, parents are not clear about who is responsible for addressing and improving poor behaviour. You have established systems to record incidents reported by adults in school. Newly introduced routines for moving around the school and new arrangements for breaktimes and lunchtime have already led to a decrease in reported behaviour incidents. However, pupils and parents said that poor behaviour continues to happen. Concerns are not always resolved. Leaders have drawn up credible plans to address this.

Trust leaders have funded additional support for the development of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has initially focused on

ensuring that pupils with the highest level of need are getting the right provision. Leaders are starting to work with teachers to identify how they can adapt their teaching to support the learning of pupils with SEND across the full curriculum. Leaders have identified that targets and support need to be more precise so that they can evaluate the effectiveness of the support that is in place. You shared the plans that are in place to improve further the provision for pupils with SEND.

Staff recognise the positive changes that are taking place because of leaders' and the trust's actions. Many staff feel proud to be part of the team at Burrowmoor. However, staff have experienced a lot of changes and their workloads are high. Recently introduced assessment systems are overburdensome and are not leading to the improvements in teaching that you and other leaders intend. These systems require review. Subject leaders also need further support and guidance to carry out their roles successfully.

Trust and school leaders have prioritised the safety of pupils. Systems to keep the most vulnerable pupils safe are now in place. The involvement of external services for these pupils is timely and there is evidence of effective joint work with these professionals. Trust leaders commissioned an external audit of safeguarding and are acting rapidly to ensure that all recommendations are put in place. The trust is providing extra support to the designated safeguarding lead. You recognise that there is more to be done to ensure early help is in place for pupils and their families. Plans are in place to improve this.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, and the chief executive officer of the Active Learning multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Williams
His Majesty's Inspector