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6 December 2022

Victoria Kirkman
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Dear Miss Kirkman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ripley Endowed Church of England School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 8 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 November 2021.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and the interim co-executive headteacher, who commenced this role in November 2022, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. Further meetings were held with staff, members of the interim education board (IEB), the diocese and the local authority. I also spoke to leaders about their newly implemented curriculum, including early reading and the early years foundation stage. I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work with leaders, spoke to pupils and teachers and checked the school's single central record. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Ripley Endowed Church of England 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.

The school may appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders have taken swift and effective action since the previous inspection to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous section 5 inspection report. As the co-executive interim headteacher, you have instilled confidence in staff and parents. One parent commented, 'The school community has worked very hard to improve the school; we are very proud of the work the leadership team, the IEB and the staff have made since the inadequate rating was given.'

Since the previous inspection, there have been extensive changes to staffing. These changes have applied to leaders, teachers and support staff. You were commissioned in April 2022 as joint interim co-executive headteacher. You worked alongside the newly appointed interim co-executive headteacher within the federation to bring about strength and stability. Since February 2022, a highly capable IEB has been responsible for governance and has followed the academy order directive.

You have wasted no time in addressing the previous weaknesses of the school's curriculum. You have developed cross-federation links and have utilised the skills of local partner schools to develop the school's curriculum with strength. Executive leaders have orchestrated this well. You are reassuringly mindful of the need for sustainable change. Your work is empowering staff to 'own' their curriculum. As such, it is conceived, taught and monitored effectively. A considered approach to rapid improvement means that leaders are prioritising taking appropriate time to build a purposeful curriculum. Careful consideration for the succession planning of leadership, including investing in strong subject leadership throughout the school, indicates the continued capacity for further improvement.

You and senior leaders have developed the skills of new staff at pace. The school's existing approach to phonics and early reading is now taught with precision. Reading books match pupils' phonic knowledge accurately. The strategies that children develop in their youngest years, such as segmenting and blending, are used with confidence. Pupils enjoy reading. This is because they have the skills to be able to read for understanding and pleasure. You have prioritised a love of reading at every stage in school. Interesting and thought-provoking books are available in all classrooms.

The federation's special educational needs coordinator leads the development of individual plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These are detailed and ensure consistency in how provision for these pupils is planned. All pupils benefit from well-matched resources which aid them in their learning. This is especially true for pupils with SEND. These resources, alongside carefully adapted activities, ensure that all children are able to access the ambitious curriculum.

Staff report that you and other leaders are approachable. Staff feel listened to and valued. They say that you have invested in them as professionals. Leaders are willing to do what they can to help staff in their day-to-day work. Staff appreciate this. Staff, leaders and governors work together for the benefit of the pupils.

Following the school's inspection in November 2021, governors and staff have worked closely with the local authority, diocese and multi-academy trusts. The local authority commissioned an intense package of support during the spring term of 2022. This has led to rapid improvement in school. Other support, including safeguarding and health and safety audits, relevant training and professional development, have all contributed to the school's improvement.

Since the previous inspection, the IEB has been established. New members have a range of skills to support their challenge of school leaders. They ask key questions and challenge effectively to ensure that leaders are making the right decisions to improve the school. The IEB has been highly focused on the areas for improvement in the section 5 inspection report, together with ensuring the long-term financial stability of the school. Members of the IEB know the school well and have worked closely with senior leaders. The IEB is a temporary board until the school moves into a multi-academy trust.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Marcus Newby
His Majesty's Inspector