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Dear Mrs Murray

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lily Lane Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 11 and 12 January 2023 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 May 2022.

During the inspection, David Woodhouse, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, other staff, the chair of the interim executive board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority, 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 held meetings with other staff, visited lessons, carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work and reviewed documentation. We spoke with several parents and carers and reviewed the results of Ofsted's staff survey and Ofsted Parent View. I also listened to pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a trusted adult. We have considered all of this in coming to our judgement.

Lily Lane 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.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

You took up your post as part-time executive headteacher in September 2022. Two deputy headteachers carry out the shared responsibility of acting headteacher when you are not present in the school.

An IEB was formed swiftly to replace the governing body that was in place at the time of the previous inspection. The IEB comprises of members with a broad and suitable range of expertise.

Several new teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection. Added to this, there have been further external staff appointments to support the improvements in the quality of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

During the inspection, inspectors focused on those aspects of the school that were highlighted as needing improvement in the previous inspection report. This included safeguarding which was judged to be not effective in May 2022.

On taking up your position, you were faced with several pressing matters. Although you correctly prioritised the safety and behaviour of pupils, you wasted no time in taking action to resolve the considerable shortcomings in the curriculum. For example, you have ensured that pupils now learn the full range of national curriculum subjects.

You have ensured that there are appropriate leadership arrangements in place to drive forward the improvements needed to the curriculum. For instance, you have appointed leaders for each curriculum area and you are ensuring that they benefit from appropriate training. This is supporting these leaders to develop an understanding of their roles. That said, it is still early days. Some subject leaders are ill-equipped to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and make the improvements necessary. Added to this, some subject leaders are not clear enough about the knowledge that pupils should learn, including children in the early years. This hinders how well they support teachers to deliver the curriculum in these subjects.

Teachers' use of assessment strategies in many subjects remains weak. This presents a considerable barrier to progress because teachers are unclear as to where pupils have large gaps in their knowledge. These gaps in knowledge result from the poor quality and limited curriculum that pupils have experienced in the past. Pupils are beginning to benefit from the new curriculum. For example, they can confidently discuss the broad knowledge that they have gained recently. However, their understanding of some vocabulary and concepts lacks sufficient depth.

In more established curriculums, such as mathematics and English, including early reading, most teachers are more confident in their subject knowledge. Despite this, teachers do not deliver these curriculums consistently well. Subject leaders lack sufficient oversight of the quality of curriculum delivery or how well pupils achieve. These subject leaders have not ensured that teachers receive appropriate guidance to deliver mathematics, English and early reading curriculums effectively. Teachers do not routinely

use assessment strategies to address misconceptions or to improve pupils' fluency and practice in basic skills. In response, you have recently introduced formal assessments for mathematics, reading and writing to provide subject leaders with information about pupils' achievement and to inform curriculum improvements.

You have judiciously sought expert advice and guidance to review and improve the provision for pupils with SEND. For example, you commissioned a SEND audit soon after the previous inspection to provide a clear action plan for further improvement. You have used this audit to instigate change. For example, until the start of the autumn term, many pupils with SEND spent much of the day learning outside of their main classroom in the 'Lily Pad' room. Pupils now spend more time accessing the same curriculum as their classmates.

Leaders have introduced new systems to ensure the early identification of pupils' needs. For example, children in the early years now benefit from appropriate specialist support as soon as concerns are raised. Referrals for statutory assessment are also happening more rapidly. The expertise of staff who work with pupils in the Lily Pad has been strengthened. As a result, pupils with SEND are beginning to receive more focused, timely and effective support to help them to overcome their difficulties.

Leaders have taken effective steps to improve teachers' understanding of their professional responsibilities in relation to promoting equality of opportunity, having high expectations of all pupils and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. You have provided teachers with some training to help them to recognise pupils' additional needs. However, teachers and teaching assistants lack the training that they need to successfully adapt their delivery of the curriculum to support pupils with SEND to learn well.

With the support of the IEB and the local authority, you have reviewed the leadership structure in the school. You have worked in consultation with the whole staff to develop a clear vision for the school. This has recalibrated leaders' ambition and expectations for all. Staff morale has been galvanised through their understanding of the part that they will play towards achieving this ambitious vision.

You have established sharp priorities and communicated them clearly to all members of the school community, including parents. You have worked constructively with staff to clarify their roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in clearer lines of accountability. Leaders have provided further clarity for staff through the introduction of systems for performance management reviews and appraisal. This has provided staff with a shared understanding of leaders' expectations. In turn, this has harnessed a sense of team spirit as staff understand that they are working to achieve a common aim. Despite the significant changes at the school and raised expectations, staff are fully on board. Staff appreciate the clarity that you have provided. They value leaders' approachability and consideration of their workload and well-being.

You have placed a high priority on improving pupils' behaviour. This aspect of your work has been a considerable success. The new behaviour policy clearly communicates your

high expectations of pupils and staff. It is implemented consistently by staff and understood well by pupils. Pupils and staff reported the marked improvement that they have witnessed in behaviour. Pupils spoke with great pride about achieving the rewards that you have introduced to acknowledge their positive attitudes and behaviour. The school is now calm and orderly. In most lessons, pupils learn without disruption. This focus on behaviour was necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff alike. Achieving this important milestone means that you can now turn your attention fully to improving the quality of the curriculum.

Your plans for school improvement have been hampered to some degree by instability in staffing. This is especially true in the early years. Leaders have recently reorganised staffing to strengthen provision in the Reception year. As a consequence, there has been some progress in designing the curriculum in the early years. Leaders have identified the important content of the curriculum and are consulting with subject leaders to ensure that children gain the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to succeed in their future learning.

Another barrier to improvement that you have faced is the weakness in wider leadership capacity. You have begun to address this by providing leaders with training and development opportunities. You have made effective use of support from the local authority to begin this development. As a result, leaders are starting to take more ownership of their areas of responsibility and to develop their skills in improvement planning and evaluation.

The most urgent priority you faced after taking up your position as executive headteacher was to address the considerable failings in safeguarding. This work has been successfully supported by the local authority, who swiftly carried out a comprehensive audit to identify the priorities for improvement.

Following this review, you and the safeguarding team have acted with urgency to improve systems and procedures at the school. You provide staff with regular training and updates to ensure that they remain vigilant to the signs and indicators that a pupil may be at risk of harm. You have also strengthened staff's awareness of the wider safeguarding risks that pupils potentially face. Leaders have introduced a clear reporting system and ensured that staff have a clear understanding of how to report concerns. When staff raise concerns, they are followed up with urgency by leaders.

Leaders meet regularly to ensure that the actions taken to support vulnerable children are suitably rigorous. This process has been supported by the local authority, who have allocated an officer to provide supervision for members of the safeguarding team. Pupils reported that they feel safe in school and described the improvements that they have seen.

Following a health and safety audit, you have given careful consideration to how the school site and areas of the building are utilised. For example, classrooms have been reallocated, so that younger pupils are less exposed to the risks posed by stairs. You have

implemented a new system to ensure that the building is secure at entry and exit points. You have carried out thorough investigations when accidents have occurred or on the rare occasion when any of the security arrangements are breached.

You continue to review safeguarding arrangements regularly. You have also strengthened routines to ensure more effective supervision of pupils. For example, you have recently, improved arrangements at lunchtime to reduce the number of pupils using the playground at the same time. This has led to a reduction in the number of accidents.

The improvement in pupils' behaviour and the support for pupils with SEND have also had a positive impact on pupils' safety. Pupils are now well supervised at all times. Pupils who have struggled to manage their own behaviour in the past receive more effective support to manage their emotions.

While safeguarding is now effective, you plan to strengthen the provision further, for example, through reviewing how concerns reported are categorised, analysing issues and training staff to provide focused support to vulnerable pupils.

Your appointment, coupled with the external support from the local authority, has contributed significantly to the pace and impact of recent improvements. The IEB uses its expertise to maintain a sharp focus on leaders' actions to improve the school and to provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders. The IEB has been pivotal in securing the future stability of the school by driving the process of academisation rapidly. This process will be complete on 1 March 2023.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Janette Walker
His Majesty's Inspector