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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 28 and 29 March 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 second 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, Julie Harrison, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, including the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, met with staff and pupils, observed behaviour in lessons and around the school and reviewed school documents. 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 last inspection, there has been a short-term change in headteacher. Currently, no substantive headteacher is in post. A number of staff have joined, left or are leaving.

You have made some improvements in how the early reading curriculum is implemented.

The recently appointed lead for phonics is working with the English hub to develop more consistent provision. Teachers now regularly revisit previous learning and check that pupils have a secure understanding. Pupils get more practice with the sounds they are learning. Leaders have started to review and strengthen interventions to help pupils catch up with their phonic knowledge. However, this work is in its early stages. Staff require further training to improve the support they offer pupils who have fallen behind with reading.

Work to strengthen the teaching of reading for older pupils has also begun. With other leaders, you are strengthening teachers' subject knowledge by providing training and curriculum plans that outline the development of pupils' reading knowledge over time. Where these plans are working well, pupils tackle appropriately ambitious texts with enthusiasm and develop their reading skills, such as inference and deduction. However, in some lessons, teachers do not introduce vocabulary clearly or focus on developing pupils' reading knowledge. When this happens, pupils are less engaged in learning. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

In other subjects, implementation of the curriculum is not yet consistent. Where the curriculum is taught well, teachers revise previous learning before moving on to new knowledge and content. They clearly introduce new learning and give pupils time to practise their skills. When this happens, pupils are attentive, concentrate and behave well. They speak with confidence about what they learn. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. They have not established routines that promote positive attitudes and consistently good behaviour. Work is not clearly explained or does not build on what pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils do not learn what leaders intend and do not make the progress that they are capable of.

You have ensured that a suitable curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is now in place. With other leaders, you review patterns of behaviour carefully and use this information to adjust the curriculum. Pupils are learning about different religions and lifestyles. They are beginning to show more tolerant and inclusive attitudes. Pupils report that there is less bullying, and this is supported by your records of bullying behaviour.

The continued pace of changes and staffing is impacting negatively on staff morale. You are aware of this and recognise the importance of securing a shared commitment to the development of new ways of working and establishing manageable workloads. You have taken steps to give subject leaders time to carry out their roles. You recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that all staff have the time and expertise to carry out their roles effectively.

The interim executive board have improved their support and challenge since January. These leaders work with you to ensure that agreed actions are put into place. They audit aspects of provision carefully so that they understand how well changes are working and where further developments are required.

You have worked hard with other leaders to establish effective systems to identify pupils and families who are vulnerable. These are now in place. Systems for pupils to share any worries are in place in every classroom. Pupils trust their teachers to deal with these well. Staff know and use the systems to record safeguarding concerns. These concerns are followed up promptly by leaders. Where there are significant risks, leaders act rapidly and persistently to secure the help that is needed. Safeguarding is now effective.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Active Learning 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