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15 May 2023

Sarah Storer  
Interim executive headteacher  
Holgate Meadows School  
Lindsay Road  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Storer

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Holgate Meadows School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 29 and 30 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 March 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and the principal and other senior leaders the actions taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I also met with the chair of the transition board, a school improvement partner for the local authority, and the regional director for NEXUS multi-academy trust. I held a telephone conversation with an external school improvement adviser commissioned by the interim executive board (IEB). I toured the school, met with some pupils as well as curriculum and subject leaders. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including your most recent plans for school improvement. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Holgate Meadows 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**

Following the first monitoring inspection, you were appointed as interim executive headteacher. You started your post in January 2023. Two temporary assistant headteachers are now permanent. The process of the school joining the NEXUS multi-academy trust has continued. The trust is currently conducting due diligence checks. The regional director for the trust is working closely with you to support this process and help the leadership team to pick up the pace of improvement. A transition board has been appointed. This board will work as a committee on behalf of the IEB to support leaders and staff through the transition into the trust. This inspection focused on the progress made by the school to improve the curriculum, the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the management of pupils' behaviour.

There is now a clear strategy for whole-school improvement. Soon after your appointment, you collaborated with senior leaders to develop a suitable plan to bring about more rapid improvement. You have ensured that the actions in this plan are sharply focused. Leaders and governors can measure these actions. The plan details appropriate steps to improve the curriculum and make sure that safeguarding is effective.

After the standard inspection, leaders reviewed the curriculum. They appointed a leader with responsibility for reading and phonics. There is now a consistent approach in place to teach phonics. Staff have received suitable training. The leader frequently checks the progress that pupils make. Work has begun to establish a culture for reading in school. Initiatives promoting daily reading for pleasure and adults reading whole class texts are in the early stages and are not yet consistent across all classes. The leader is in the process of developing a policy for the teaching of reading across the school.

There is now a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. A scheme of work supports teaching and learning. New resources have been purchased to help pupils in lessons. The mathematics leader has accessed pertinent training. She provides advice and guidance to teachers to develop their expertise. There is a coherent curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education. Leaders are developing a way to check that all pupils are taught all relevant aspects of this curriculum. They place a strong focus on preparing pupils for adulthood and further education and careers. This starts with the youngest pupils in the primary years.

In other areas of the curriculum, leaders have worked with staff to develop and design the content of different curriculum subjects. The curriculum is broad and is likely to provide pupils with a range of experiences. The long-term content for all subjects is detailed and mapped out. However, these developments are recent. Leaders have yet to identify clearly for teachers the most important knowledge that they need to teach pupils in each subject, when, and in what order. They have not made sure that pupils can make connections in their learning across key stages in all subjects and build on their prior learning.

Leaders know there are more improvements necessary to make sure the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. There is not a rigorous enough assessment of pupils' individual needs when they enter the school. This makes it difficult for teachers to match curriculum requirements and provision to meet pupils' needs well. Senior leaders understand the need to step up the pace of improvements to the curriculum. They have very recently commissioned an external audit to help them to identify their next steps. Leaders are sensibly using the findings from this audit to inform their strategic approach to secure more targeted and rapid improvements to the curriculum.

Subject and curriculum leaders have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They monitor and evaluate the quality of education. There are increasing opportunities for them to access appropriate training, and support staff to develop their subject knowledge. Some leaders enjoy visiting other schools and observing the practice of colleagues. Although these leaders value the improvements made following the standard inspection, there is further work to do to bring the curriculum together so that there is a clear collaborative approach. The overall intent for the curriculum is not clear enough to share and be understood by the whole school community.

Leaders have maintained their focus on improving the management of pupils' behaviour. Staff have received further training and expectations for pupils' behaviour are now more consistent, although not entirely embedded. Pupils told me that they think that the way staff manage incidents of poor behaviour has improved. The school is a more pleasant and calm place to be than at the time of the first monitoring visit. Leaders have taken effective action to reduce the number of pupils who abscond from school. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are tracked and monitored closely. Leaders are collecting evidence to show patterns of behaviour for individuals and key stages. They are beginning to identify the areas, subjects and times of day that the incidents are occurring. However, leaders do not analyse these patterns of behaviour rigorously enough. This includes when there has been an assault on staff. On occasion, leaders cannot be sure of the reasons for some pupils' poor behaviour. They are not clear which actions taken by leaders and staff have had the most beneficial impact on improving pupils' behaviour.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have further strengthened the culture of safeguarding since the first monitoring inspection. The designated leader for safeguarding and his team ensure that safeguarding remains a high priority. The recent improvements in pupils' behaviour have helped more pupils to feel safe in school. Leaders take appropriate action to make sure that pupils who attend alternative provision, or who are persistently absent from school, are safe and well. They have improved procedures to make sure that pupils do not leave the school site unattended. Most parents spoken to during the inspection felt more positive about the school and the way staff manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils who spoke with me told me that they now feel safe in school. Systems and procedures for recording and analysing the actions leaders take to safeguard pupils are not rigorous enough. This includes

individual action plans for pupils who refuse to come to school, to access education. Leaders have recently appointed an attendance worker to more effectively support learners who refuse to attend.

Members of the transition board are determined to assist leaders to drive more rapid improvements. They have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support and challenge school leaders well. A recent external audit commissioned by the IEB has accurately identified the next steps for leaders to take with regards to the curriculum.

The trust is providing good-quality support and guidance to the executive headteacher. The regional director for the trust has an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas in need of further improvement.

There is a significant proportion of pupils for whom the school cannot meet their needs, or who attend alternative provision on a full-time basis but remain on the school roll. School leaders and parents continue to work with the local authority towards a solution that ensures that these pupils receive an education that meets their needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor  
**His Majesty's Inspector**