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Richard Brown  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Brown

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Great Wilbraham CofE Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 17 and 18 May 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 October 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, governors, the local authority and the diocese 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.

I also scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' plans for improvement, safeguarding and behaviour records. I spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils from different year groups and reviewed the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We gathered the views of a range of staff and considered their views through Ofsted's online survey for school staff. I considered parents' views through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, and their free-text comments. I have evaluated all this in coming to my judgement.

**Great Wilbraham CofE 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**

Leadership, staffing and governance have remained stable since the last inspection. However, there have been changes to the membership of the governing board, with the addition of an additional associate governor. The previous inspection report, in October 2022, highlighted significant weaknesses across the school, including in arrangements to safeguard pupils from harm and in the quality of the curriculum. There are improvements in these areas, but there is still significant work to do to ensure that all pupils receive a high quality of education.

You and other leaders, well supported by the local authority advisors and the diocese, are bringing about improvements to the school's curriculum planning. The actions taken are beginning to address the weaknesses raised previously. Subject leaders now have a strong understanding of their role. The intentions of the curriculum are mostly clear. Curriculum plans are effective in supporting teachers' curriculum delivery and pupils' learning. However, there is still work to do to ensure the specific detail of the early years curriculum is sequenced clearly to align with the key stage 1 curriculum plans. Senior leaders should ensure that there is a team approach to designing and marrying the early years curriculum to each national curriculum subject.

Leaders have introduced a new reading curriculum and phonics programme. Staff have received training on how to deliver the new phonics scheme. There are positive early signs, such as staff using consistent resources and phrases to help pupils learn to read. Books are now well matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. When pupils read to adults in school, they are given helpful support to read books related closely to their needs. However, approaches to how pupils record and correct their work are inconsistent. Leaders have not made it clear how they want the information from the newly introduced catch-up sessions in reading shared with staff. This has a negative impact on how well pupils who are struggling to read achieve. The newly implemented programme in key stage 2 needs more time to be implemented and monitored fully to check if it is effective.

You have reviewed the behaviour policy with staff as a reminder of the consistent approach you expect. Due to the curriculum plans and the delivery of the curriculum being more focused and specific, pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. Pupils are engaged and interested in their learning because it is now sequenced logically. They are feeling successful due to teachers recapping on what they already know before moving on to new learning. Pupils are keen to know what is going to be taught next. Staff and pupils are clear about what is being learned and why. There were no concerns about low-level disruption throughout the lessons visited.

Subject leaders have started to check the impact of the new curriculum, but it is at a very early stage. Teachers' use of assessment in the foundation subjects is still not consistently effective. There are also inconsistencies in the expectations for setting out calculations.

You are yet to make this clear, and this is therefore hindering some pupils' understanding about how to correct their work.

The special educational needs coordinator has ensured that all pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and that their progress is reviewed regularly. Staff know their pupils well. Parents have mixed views about the school's provision for pupils with SEND. Further work is required to improve communications with parents to ensure they are aware of what leaders are improving and why, particularly about the ambitions of the curriculum for pupils with SEND.

Staff recognise that the improvements to the curriculum were needed, and they are helping to improve the curriculum delivery and pupils' outcomes. Overall, staff feel supported with their workload and well-being. However, a few members of staff express concerns about the capacity of everyone at the school due to its small size.

### **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.**

Since the previous inspection, you and other leaders have addressed the issues and gaps in safeguarding systems and processes. A new online system has been introduced, and training for all staff has been carried out. The work to improve safeguarding procedures has enabled leaders to monitor concerns accurately and to ensure that support is timely and appropriately evaluated. Staff are confident at reporting and recording concerns. Vulnerable pupils are monitored, and information, including about pupils' absence, behaviour and additional needs, is now cross-referenced, so the 'big picture' of pupils is known. Pupils say they feel safe and have a trusted adult to talk to if they are worried.

Since the previous inspection, you, your other leaders and staff have welcomed targeted support from local authority advisors and from the diocese. This has included audits of safeguarding, curriculum, governance and provision in the early years. Leaders have access to a wide range of expertise to drive school improvement. This has focused particularly on the phonics programme and reading, curriculum plans and leadership, as well as the early years indoor and outdoor provision. The Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) meets monthly to review the support and the progress made against the school's action plan.

Much of the school improvement work is new. It still depends heavily on the support offered by the local authority advisors. Governors have shown a renewed rigour. They recognise their responsibility in ensuring that the school continues to improve. The RIG and the governing body are working with leaders to make sure that they have the capacity to maintain and improve the school without the additional support in the future. Support from the diocese has included the brokering of a sponsor school in becoming part of a multi-academy trust. They are also clear that the strategic commitment of the school is paramount.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, 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

Isabel Davis  
**His Majesty's Inspector**