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Alice Guest
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Dear Ms Guest

Special measures monitoring inspection of Grove Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 7 and 8 June 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 March 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, the assistant headteacher, members of the interim executive board and 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. I also carried out visits to lessons, reviewed examples of pupils work, and spoke to staff and pupils. In addition, I reviewed a range of documents relating to school improvement and safeguarding procedures. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Grove 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

There have been considerable changes in staffing since the graded inspection in March 2022. Previously, the school's leadership structure included a co-headship arrangement. Your co-worker left the school in April 2022 and you now lead the school as a sole headteacher. An assistant headteacher, with responsibility for curriculum development, joined the school in September 2022. An assistant headteacher, who was the school's special educational needs coordinator, left in April 2023. In addition, three class teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection. Through this period of time, you and other leaders, in partnership with the local authority, have maintained a purposeful focus on school improvement.

You and your leadership team have thought carefully about ways to improve the quality of the school's curriculum. In September 2022, you worked together to introduce a new approach to teaching many subjects. This approach is proving successful. Pupils are now gaining a deeper understanding of each subject in the national curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the component knowledge and vocabulary they expect pupils to know and remember. Teachers have started to teach this information logically over time. However, in some subjects, such as science, leaders have not fully considered how they intend for pupils in mixed-aged year groups to build their knowledge from one year to the next. You recognise there is still more work to do to improve the design of the curriculum further.

The design of the curriculum in mathematics and phonics was reported on positively at the time of the previous inspection. This informed your decision to continue using the school's established curriculum plans in these subjects. You have ensured that new staff joining the school know how to teach these schemes of work effectively. This has resulted in staff following a more consistent approach. However, the curriculum is not yet having a full impact on pupils.

You and your leadership team have placed strong emphasis on improving the experiences of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, you have arranged for a member of the interim executive board to oversee leaders' work in meeting these pupils' needs. The school has also introduced a fresh policy that places a greater emphasis on teachers adapting teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The policy has been put into practice and teachers are now developing their understanding of how to support these pupils. Furthermore, you have ensured that pupils with SEND typically access the school's full curriculum and engage in classroom learning. However, some of your planned initiatives have been hampered by recent changes in senior leadership. An interim special educational needs coordinator now works at the school and is starting to accelerate the pace of improvement work.

You have worked with staff to introduce a range of initiatives and strategies to promote pupils' positive behaviours. Pupils appreciate adults' new approach to managing behaviour and feel they are now more regularly recognised for displaying 'brilliant behaviours'. This work is making a difference but there is still more to do. Pupils' behaviour in lessons has

improved and their attitudes are mostly positive, but some variation still exists across the school.

You maintain oversight of work to manage pupils' attendance. However, too many pupils still do not attend school regularly enough. You recognise that this limits pupils' learning. You intend to further increase the focus placed on promoting attendance.

You and the interim executive board have a clear strategy for improving the school. This strategy is set out in a plan of action that prioritises the right things. Leaders regularly monitor and review the impact of this improvement work. They gather a range of information that gives them an accurate view of the school. This allows them to work strategically and responsively to effect change. You have emphasised professional development for teachers as part of this work. This includes you providing additional time for subject leaders to develop their expertise in enhancing the quality of the curriculum. Although there is still much more work to do, these measures are starting to make a positive difference and the action you have taken so far has been effective.

School leaders welcome the support that has been offered to them by the local authority. This support has helped leaders to take action and make necessary changes in the school. School leaders have listened carefully to the guidance provided by external advisers and specialist consultants. This has helped leaders make well-considered decisions that are benefiting pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Leonard
His Majesty's Inspector