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22 June 2023

Harmander Dhanjal  
Executive Headteacher  
Akaal Primary School  
Grange Avenue  
Derby  
Derbyshire  
DE23 8DG

Dear Mr Dhanjal

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Akaal Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 21 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 took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and the headteacher, the director of primary education for the trust that the school proposes to join in the autumn term, other school staff and governors 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 visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, met with pupils and scrutinised documents relating to the curriculum and the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). I also reviewed the school's single central record to assess the checks made for the recruitment of new staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Akaal Primary School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.**

### **Main findings**

The previous headteacher and an assistant headteacher left the school early in 2023. The school is poised to join a multi-academy trust early in the autumn term of 2023. In the interim period, the trust has taken on the leadership of the school. The current headteacher took up their post in February 2023, alongside yourself as executive

headteacher. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up post at the start of the autumn term. You have also appointed three new class teachers. The chair of the board of trustees, referred to by the school as the chair of governors, took up their position in May 2022, following the previous inspection.

Since taking up their roles, you and your leaders have wasted no time in renewing the school's vision for the future. You have embraced the findings of the previous inspection, and other external reviews of the school, to inform your comprehensive improvement planning. You have recognised the necessary urgency to improve the curriculum for all pupils so that they achieve as well as they can. You and your leaders have worked collaboratively with all teaching and non-teaching staff to share your rationale for curriculum change and to improve staff's workload and well-being. Staff morale is positive. Staff say that they strongly value leaders' approachability and visibility. They say that they feel empowered by the changes you have introduced. Staff have embraced the greater training opportunities that have helped to develop a shared understanding of what high-quality school provision is.

Teaching staff early in their careers have not received their statutory entitlement for continued professional development through the early career framework. The current headteacher has rectified this situation. These staff are now well supported.

The school's curriculum is undergoing a wholesale transformation. Within the last few weeks, leaders have launched a new timetable for all pupils. Pupils now learn reading, including phonics, writing and mathematics daily. You have introduced discrete learning sessions for all foundation subjects. In all subjects, leaders have started to identify, with precision, the important knowledge and vocabulary they want pupils to learn and build over time from Reception to Year 6. Leaders are in the process of implementing a new scheme to strengthen pupils' accuracy and fluency in reading, including for children in Reception class.

These curriculum changes are beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders recognise that the development of the curriculum requires more time. It is too soon to see the impact of these changes on pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, pupils and staff are beginning to benefit from the renewed ambition, clarity and coherence of the school's developing curriculum. Pupils told me that they like the changes that are being made. They say that the way the subjects are now organised is helping them to remember more.

The previous inspection called for leaders to sharpen their processes and target-setting in support of pupils with SEND. You and your leaders have improved the oversight of the provision for these pupils. You have acted with urgent determination to improve information sharing with staff so that there is clarity about identified needs, strategies to support pupils with SEND and what these pupils should achieve in their learning. Pupils with SEND learn the same, new, curriculum as their peers.

Recently, staff have become better informed about how they can provide specific support in the classroom for pupils with SEND. These staff have welcomed the additional training

and strengthened communication, enabling them to support pupils effectively. Again, it is too soon to see the impact of these changes on the achievement of these pupils. However, the necessary foundations to improve this aspect of the school's work have been laid, including strengthening staff's engagement with parents and carers.

Governors take their role seriously. They understand their statutory responsibilities and have strengthened their skills in holding leaders to account. Governors have worked effectively with external agencies in support of the whole-school changes that they know are necessary. Relationships between governors and leaders are positive and purposeful. Governors are well informed about the school's development priorities and the progress now being made to achieve them.

The school has benefited from support from the trust that the school is poised to join in the autumn term. For example, leaders have benefited from support in establishing the strategic direction for the school with the purpose of improving the provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens  
**His Majesty's Inspector**