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21 July 2023

Julia Patrick  
Executive Principal  
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Dear Mrs Patrick

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of The Newbridge School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 20 and 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 was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in June 2022.

During the inspection, Mark Rhatigan, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Dick Vasey, OI, Mohamed Patel, OI and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO of the multi-academy trust, other staff, a trustee and a governor 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. We also completed deep dives in English, mathematics, science and physical education as well as visiting other lessons. We considered the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We met with leaders responsible for behaviour, attendance and personal development. We met with staff and pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**The Newbridge School remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.**

## **The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

Since the time of the last inspection, the school has joined the Lionheart Education Trust. There have been a number of changes to the senior leadership team with the appointment of three new assistant headteachers. A further assistant headteacher has been appointed for September 2023. The heads of department in mathematics and English took up their posts in September 2022.

Leaders have ensured that there is a well-sequenced curriculum in place which is broad and ambitious. In each subject, the curriculum sets out what pupils will study and when. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. They provide opportunities for pupils to recall what they have learned previously. They ask questions to check pupils' understanding. However, the precision with which teachers use these strategies does not always result in them identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions. In some lessons, teachers skilfully use modelling to help pupils connect their learning over time. In other lessons, teachers do not always ensure that tasks are matched precisely to what pupils' already know and understand. There are times when learning does not move on at the most appropriate point to help pupils focus on key learning and deepen their understanding. Most pupils are developing their knowledge over time. However, some pupils, particularly those who miss learning due to poor behaviour, are not developing their knowledge over time sufficiently to ensure that they are secure in their understanding of the subjects they study. There are gaps in these pupils' books.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They employ a range of strategies to ensure that pupils read regularly and develop their vocabulary. All pupils read with their tutors in the morning twice a week. Pupils who need extra help with their reading are swiftly identified. These pupils say they value the support they receive. In the early stages of these strategies being introduced, there is some evidence of positive impact on pupils' reading ability.

Leaders have ensured that there are systems in place to identify pupils with SEND promptly. Teachers receive information about these pupils and are aware of who needs extra support in their classes. Some teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. This practice is not yet consistent across all teachers. Leaders have employed a new assistant headteacher to develop further the strategic oversight of the provision for pupils with SEND.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were challenged to improve pupils' behaviour in lessons. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour system. Many pupils say that lessons are calmer now. Most pupils in the lessons inspectors visited were purposefully engaged in their learning. Pupils are rewarded for positive behaviour with bronze, silver, gold and platinum awards. Despite this improvement, a minority of pupils continue to disrupt lessons. Pupils continue to be frustrated by this.

Leaders have created a curriculum to teach pupils about respect as well as diversity and discrimination. Pupils learn about these themes in assemblies, personal development lessons and timetabled sessions that focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Leaders have established a 'no bystanders' campaign to introduce the idea that pupils should look after one another. Pupils recognise the importance that leaders have placed on respecting difference. They say that there has been a reduction in pupils' use of derogatory language. Pupils are now more aware than at the time of the previous inspection of how they can report issues and share concerns with staff. Some pupils talk about their confidence in these systems and in staff to address their worries. However, pupils continue to raise concerns about the regularity with which they hear derogatory language. Some pupils remain worried by bullying. While there have been significant strides forward in improving behaviour since the time of the last inspection, leaders are aware that there is more work to be done to ensure that all pupils' experiences of school are positive.

Leaders use external alternative provision appropriately to support pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour. They identify which provision is best suited for pupils' development and regularly check on pupils' welfare and progress. The school also uses a trust-wide provision, the 'Green Room', that supports some pupils in managing their behaviour and in building their confidence and engagement with education. The use of this provision is in its early stages. Leaders have not yet established clear and robust systems to ensure that pupils do not miss out on their education when accessing the Green Room. Nor have they established clear communication and recording systems to share information about this provision, and when pupils will access it, with parents and carers and staff.

Those responsible for governance share school leaders' vision and values. They know the school well. They provide leaders with effective support in their work to develop the teaching of the curriculum and the provision for pupils with SEND. Trustees and governors are aware of the importance of the measures leaders are taking to improve behaviour and eradicate the use of derogatory language. They participate in school reviews and challenge leaders to develop aspects of the school's provision further. Trust subject directors play a key role in designing curriculums, yet there remains flexibility for leaders in this school to make adaptations as appropriate for staff and pupils. The trust provides training for staff to understand how to support pupils with SEND. Staff talk very positively about the impact of training on their practice. The majority of staff share positive views about how leaders cater for their workload and well-being. Staff can take advantage of golden time, which provides them with a day each year to use as they wish outside of school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Lionheart Education Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Fearn-Davies  
**His Majesty's Inspector**