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Gemma Snell
Headteacher
Weston Point Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Snell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Weston Point Community Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on Tuesday 11 July 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 November 2022.

During the inspection, Michelle Joyce, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, governors and a representative of 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. We visited some lessons, spoke with pupils, spoke with groups of staff and reviewed samples of documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Weston Point Community 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

Since the previous inspection, in November 2022, you took up post as interim headteacher for two terms. Your role concludes at the end of term in July 2023. The new headteacher, who will start at the school in September 2023, has recently met parents and carers, pupils and staff. The chair of governors and some other members of the governing body are new to their roles since the previous inspection. The early years teacher is also new to post.

You are working with staff to focus their attention on tackling the key areas of weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Staff told inspectors that they are committed to supporting you and other leaders to bring about the necessary change. Your actions are starting to improve the quality of education that pupils receive and to improve their attendance. Added to this, you are striving to strengthen the relationship between leaders and parents at the school.

You and other leaders have started to think more carefully about the content of the curriculum in each subject across the school. For example, you have decided to use published schemes, where you can, to give staff a basis on which to build the curriculum further. You have started to identify the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. However, this is less well thought out for those classes that will contain two different year groups of pupils in autumn 2023. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are beginning to learn key concepts and vocabulary in some subjects for the first time. Staff are now starting to help pupils to build on their previous learning. Pupils' improved learning of the curriculum content is beginning to reduce the gaps in their knowledge.

Staff are starting to implement the chosen phonics programme with success. However, some of the reading books that staff provide for some pupils do not match the letter sounds they know. This means that, at times, pupils' success and fluency in reading are held back. You have already started to take steps to improve staff's use of reading books. Those pupils who find reading more difficult have some opportunities to practise their phonic knowledge with staff. However, this does not happen often enough. In addition, this additional support is not as effective as it should be in helping these pupils to catch up.

You have made sure that staff are starting to provide pupils with a wider programme of experiences and opportunities than in the past. For example, pupils are beginning to take part in school performances, educational trips and residential. Pupils are learning about respect and tolerance. However, pupils do not learn enough about fundamental British values, such as democracy.

In classes, including in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as other pupils. Pupils with SEND are starting to attend school more often than previously. They behave and learn more successfully than in the past. A strength of your approach has been your decision to help all staff to become more knowledgeable about meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding is effective. This is because you have successfully addressed the significant weaknesses that existed previously in the safeguarding procedures and culture. You have established a common understanding among staff of the main local safeguarding risks to pupils at the school. You have provided staff with regular, up-to-date information and access to training on safeguarding. You have established a culture in which vigilant, well-informed staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They quickly share any low-level concerns with relevant leaders. Where needed, leaders promptly contact other agencies to provide early help and protection for pupils and their families. You act to safeguard pupils who are absent from school or attending alternative provision. You have made sure that leaders' work on safeguarding is frequently reviewed and refined, including by using recommended audits and guidance. You have made sure that pupils understand how adults at the school keep them safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including against online dangers such as grooming.

Leadership capacity continues to be poor. The team of leaders steering the improvement of the school consists of yourself and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). You both conclude your time in post at the school at the end of this term. There are no other senior leaders. During a recent recruitment process, governors were unable to find the right person to appoint as a deputy headteacher. Governors and the local authority are aware of the need to ensure that enough leadership support is in place for the new headteacher in September 2023. Already, a new SENCo has been appointed from within the staff team to take the role forward.

You have used the support provided by the local authority wisely to improve several aspects of your work. For example, the support that you have received for SEND and safeguarding has helped you to strengthen your systems. You have also valued the help that you have received from external experts on mathematics and the support received from the local English hub to improve staff's teaching of phonics.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
His Majesty's Inspector