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13 September 2023

Alison Farquharson  
Executive Headteacher  
Chigwell Row Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Farquharson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Chigwell Row Infant School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on the 18 and 19 of 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, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, including the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust and chair of the interim executive board, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I discussed with you the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, met with staff, including leaders of subjects and safeguarding, spoke with pupils and reviewed a range of school documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Chigwell Row Infant 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.**

**I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.**

## **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to leadership and staffing. You have appointed new leaders for the early years and to oversee special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You have also appointed several teaching assistants. This inspection focused on the quality of education, including: reading, provision for pupils with SEND and the early years. The inspection also focused on how effectively leaders are bringing about improvements.

You have improved the way that reading is taught. You have invested in training for staff and purchased additional resources to support pupils' reading practice. Staff are now clear about what pupils need to know at each stage. Teachers follow the reading curriculum closely and use consistent language and routines in reading lessons. Pupils who need to catch up receive additional support from teaching assistants. Teachers regularly check the phonics that pupils know. Most pupils are now learning to read well. However, a minority of pupils are not. This is because teachers do not adjust activities well enough to keep all pupils interested and engaged in their learning.

In other subjects, you have ensured that a broad curriculum is in place. In some subjects, the most important knowledge is still not set out clearly enough. This makes it difficult for teachers to select and then teach the most important concepts that pupils need to learn. As a result, sequences of lessons do not always help pupils to make links with what they already know. This makes it difficult for pupils to understand what is being taught. Sometimes, pupils' lack of understanding goes unnoticed. This is because teachers question individual pupils about what they have learned, but do not use other strategies to check whether the whole class has understood.

You have improved the provision for children in the early years. The curriculum now sets out, in a logical order, the knowledge that children will learn. You have also set out how the curriculum is adapted for children with SEND. Additional support from external specialists and from within the trust has helped early years leaders to build expertise. You recognise there is more to do to ensure that lessons reflect what is set out in the curriculum, for example, through a clear focus on developing language skills through play.

You have made a good start in strengthening support for pupils with SEND. Clear plans are now in place for these pupils. Staff have had training on how to support pupils with different kinds of special educational needs. They can explain how this has helped them to better understand and meet the needs of pupils. However, monitoring of support for pupils with SEND is at an early stage. You recognise that, as systems for monitoring become more embedded, you will know more about what is working well and where adjustments may be needed.

As part of your work to improve the school, you have recognised the need to communicate more with parents. You have developed new ways of sharing information about what is happening in the school. Parents are positive about, and supportive of, the changes you are making. They recognise the improvements you are bringing about. Staff,

too, feel part of a trusted and valued team. The need for change has led to a temporary increase in staff workloads. However, staff appreciate your efforts to support their developing subject leadership roles.

You have found it helpful, in evaluating your ongoing work to bring about improvements, to receive reports from external professionals, such as advisers from the local authority and the English hub. Members of the interim executive board visit the school regularly to review changes. Maintaining a clear focus on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, in all aspects of monitoring, remains your priority.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the CEO of the Epping Forest Schools Partnership multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Williams  
**His Majesty's Inspector**