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Kathryn McGuinness
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Dear Mrs McGuinness

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bradwell Junior School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 26 and 27 September 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.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, Sarah Allison, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Helen Atkins OI and I discussed with you, governors 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. We looked at curriculum planning for phonics, mathematics, history, geography, physical education, computing and religious education. We visited lessons and spoke with groups of pupils and staff. The inspection team looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance and plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. I looked at the record of checks that schools must carry out on adults who work with pupils. The inspection team considered the view of parents from the Ofsted Parent View survey. We also spoke to parents outside the school and considered a letter from a local resident. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Bradwell Junior School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made insufficient progress to improve the school.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures.

The school has not secured improvements in the curriculum quickly enough. The very recent improvements that have been made are at an embryonic stage of implementation. As such, these improvements have not had the desired impact.

The school has introduced a programme for teaching phonics. At the time of the inspection, the programme had been running for two weeks. The programme provides the school with a systematic way of teaching pupils to read. However, the school has not accurately assessed which pupils need to access this programme. A significant proportion of pupils who have already mastered reading are being taught phonics. This means that these pupils are covering content that is well below what they can already do. Beyond phonics, the school has not yet established a reading curriculum that sets out what pupils will learn and when. Additionally, insufficient action has been taken to ensure that pupils read regularly. A new reading diary has very recently been introduced. However, its use is not consistently understood or applied. There is no system in place to check how well this new approach works.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It has had sufficient time to show early signs of success. However, across the rest of the curriculum, improvements have been too slow. In a small number of subjects, the school has adopted a curriculum that sets out the order in which content will be taught. However, these subjects are at the earliest stages of implementation. Staff have not been trained to teach these subjects effectively. The school has yet to start addressing weaknesses across the rest of the subjects. As such, the majority of the curriculum remains disjointed and does not take sufficient account of what pupils have learned before.

Governors are passionate about the school and its place in the community. They have supported the school to reduce pupil absence. They have attended training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities better. They have begun to check more closely on how things are improving in the school. However, this work is in its infancy. The governing body does not yet have a secure enough understanding of the curriculum and is not able to identify its strengths and weaknesses. The level of challenge and support has not yet resulted in the school making quick enough improvements. The governing body has not ensured that the school's safeguarding procedures are effective.

The school continues to have the support of the community that it serves. Parents and pupils are unanimously positive. Working with the local authority, the school has developed plans for improvement. However, these plans do not systematically address how all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection will be tackled. The plan has

not resulted in improvements being brought around quickly enough.

Serious weaknesses in safeguarding remain. Concerns about pupils are not always followed up robustly or quickly enough. Important information is not always passed on to other agencies when it should be. Safeguarding records are incomplete. In one case, in response to an incident, the school took action to remind pupils about how to stay safe. However, the events leading up to this and the actions taken were not recorded. Across the staff, there is an inconsistent understanding of who should record what and when. However, the school carries out the checks that need to be made on adults who work at the school. The record of these checks meets statutory requirements. Pupils know how to stay safe in the community and online. Staff and governors have had recent safeguarding training.

The school has benefited from working informally with a local multi-academy trust. This is enabling staff to understand their roles and responsibilities better. However, this too is at an early stage. The full benefit of this support is yet to be realised.

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

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
His Majesty's Inspector