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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Michelle King
Headteacher
Idsall School
Coppice Green Lane
Shifnal
Shropshire
TF11 8PD

Dear Ms King

Special measures monitoring inspection of Idsall School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 21 and 22 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in September 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, Sultanat Yunus, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) and the director of education for the trust 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 visited lessons, scrutinised documents, observed break and lunchtimes, met with groups of staff and groups of pupils, and talked to staff and pupils informally throughout the inspection. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as requiring special measures.

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, the school has joined a multi-academy trust. There have been significant changes to the senior team, including the appointment of two assistant headteachers. In addition, a deputy headteacher responsible for behaviour and a senior leader specialising in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have also joined the school. Both members of staff have been seconded to your school from other schools within the multi-academy trust. These changes, alongside changes to the roles and responsibilities of the rest of your leadership team, are enabling you to focus your work on the right things. Leaders from across the multi-academy trust have supported you well to achieve this. You are taking the right actions, in the right order and at the right pace. At the time of the inspection, there remained some staffing gaps, which you are working to fill.

Behaviour in lessons has improved. However, there is still work to be done. During the inspection, most lessons visited were calm, with pupils readily following staff instructions. However, low-level disruption persists in some lessons, and while most teachers now challenge poor behaviour, not all do so consistently. Leaders are now aware of where pupils' behaviour does not meet their expectations and are working with staff and pupils to resolve this. Pupils recognise that there have been changes to the behaviour system and appreciate the increased consistency from staff. They know what will happen if they do not follow the school's expectations. This is helping most pupils to make better choices about their own behaviour.

Since the last inspection, leaders have begun to systematically analyse their behaviour data. This is helping the school to identify those pupils who struggle to meet your high expectations. You have recently begun a programme of targeted interventions to support pupils to manage their behaviour better. However, this work is in its infancy and has yet to show impact. You recognise that there is more work to be done to develop a clear picture of why some pupils display unwanted behaviours.

There have been several improvements to the provision for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. You have focused your attention on better understanding pupils' views and creating opportunities for pupils to raise concerns with you about their experiences. However, pupils told inspectors that incidents of discriminatory behaviour are still frequent, and too many do not yet feel comfortable or confident in raising these concerns. You are aware of this and are continuing to focus your attention on ensuring pupils feel able to raise their concerns with you. You have also continued to reshape the content of the PSHE curriculum. This now builds successfully on pupils' prior knowledge and is tightly focused on some of the most important issues facing pupils. You have prioritised staff training to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and confidence needed to tackle the challenging concepts covered by the curriculum. There is work ongoing to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively.

You have begun to tackle the weaknesses in reading identified at the previous inspection. However, the work you have done so far has not allowed you to develop a clear

understanding of the precise gaps in pupils' reading ability. As a result, the support these pupils are receiving is not well focused on their needs and consequently is not helping them quickly enough to read fluently.

You have carried out valuable work to improve the quality of the school's curriculum. Across each subject, the curriculum now identifies the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and outlines when they will learn this in greater detail. You have set a clear direction for this work and are continuing to focus your attention on refining the curriculum further. You have worked hard to ensure that pupils with SEND have their individual needs accurately identified. This work is progressing well; however, more work is needed before this objective is met. You are working closely with parents to achieve this. You have made sure that staff now have access to the information they need about pupils' individual needs in order to support these pupils in lessons. There is still work to be done to ensure that staff use this information consistently well in lessons.

The single central record remains compliant, with all relevant checks in place. Staff have had appropriate safeguarding training. They know the pupils well and are quick to report concerns when they have them. However, there is some variation in leaders' response to concerns raised. Safeguarding case files looked at during the inspection showed that leaders are not always responding to concerns in a timely manner. This means that some pupils do not get the help they need when they need it. Consequently, the risks to pupils are not always managed well enough and at times the concerns escalate. Additionally, while leaders have begun to tighten processes to check on pupils' attendance, this work is still in its early stages. For example, too often, registers are completed inaccurately. Consequently, leaders are not always aware of which pupils are in school. Leaders recognise the urgency with which they need to tackle this.

The trust's director of education is working closely with the school and spends at least a day a week on site. This is proving valuable. The director of education is supporting you and your team well. She is working alongside you and your staff, helping the team to develop their own skills. The director of education also has a sound understanding of the school's areas for development. Consequently, she has commissioned additional support from the trust when needed. The support from the trust has been well targeted and well thought out. School leaders and staff have welcomed this support. The trust is committed to continuing to support the school in this way as long as this is needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Alexander Laney
His Majesty's Inspector