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Dear Mrs Rischer and Mrs Graham

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Eastlands Junior School (Welbeck Federation of Schools)**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 29 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 took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

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, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chair of the governing body, other staff, and a representative from 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. I also visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, spoke to pupils and reviewed documentation relating to attendance, the curriculum and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). 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 become good.**

### **Main findings**

Since the previous graded inspection, staffing levels have remained stable. The school has appointed one new class teacher.

You have comprehensive and well-informed plans in place to drive the necessary improvements in the school. All leaders have a realistic and transparent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for continued development. You have sought and taken on board advice from external sources of expertise, including the local authority and local multi-academy trusts. Staff speak with enthusiasm about the professional learning opportunities extended to them. Regular 'spotlight' checks take place to ensure that the intended impact of these opportunities is being realised.

Staff morale is positive. Staff say that the 'Eastlands team spirit' means that there is a shared sense of optimism about the vision and future success of the school.

The school's curriculum is undergoing a process of transformation. Subject leaders are ensuring that all staff have precise clarity about what is taught and when. They have further ensured that curriculum plans typically build on what pupils have learned previously. The content of the curriculum is underpinned by the ambition and requirements of the National Curriculum.

Leaders have devised 'knowledge pillars' to help deepen pupils' knowledge and skills across most subjects. Pupils' work demonstrates that staff are following the new curriculum plans which they have helped to devise. Very occasionally, the planned curriculum duplicates learning that pupils have already encountered, and successfully learned, in key stage 1. Leaders recognise that the development of the curriculum requires more time.

You have continued to prioritise reading. For all classes, the school has invested in new reading books that stimulate pupils' interests while also promoting their understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy reading. The school has launched a new 'six-point' strategy to strengthen pupils' reading comprehension. Pupils at an early stage of learning to read are well supported in developing their reading accuracy and fluency. Routines are well established. These pupils display determination and resilience to succeed. They have learned to spot and correct their own errors and are keen to do well. Pupils' overall achievement in reading has improved.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use this to design learning activities that engage most pupils. Most pupils are keen to join in whole-class discussions in most of their subjects. Teachers' use of 'simmering questions' helps pupils to remember what they have learned before so that they are ready for new learning.

The changes made to the curriculum are helping pupils to improve their achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, the quality of pupils' written work across the school remains too variable. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing are not as consistently high as they need to be. Too often, pupils' misconceptions in spelling and their use of English punctuation and grammar are not remedied as swiftly as

they need to be. As a result, some pupils make repeated errors in the accuracy of their writing. Sometimes, pupils do not have enough time to focus on the accuracy and depth of their written work, particularly when they are unsure of the knowledge they are expected to apply. When this happens, pupils lose focus and their concentration drifts.

The previous inspection called for all staff to improve the quality of support for pupils with SEND. This aspect of the school's work has been overhauled. The coordinators for the provision of pupils with SEND work closely with all staff to ensure that these pupils' needs are both understood and met. Staff receive the right amount of information they need to adapt their teaching effectively. Pupils with SEND, and their parents and carers, are fully involved in their own education. The school works well with specialist services to make sure that pupils with SEND receive the extra support they need.

Pupils' attendance has improved rapidly. Expectations are high. Leaders have put in place robust processes that reflect understanding and care, without compromising the school's renewed expectations. Consequently, far fewer pupils are regularly absent from school than was previously the case.

Pupils are happy in school. They appreciate the help and support that all staff provide. Relationships between pupils and with staff are positive. An inclusive, caring and nurturing ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils know they are well cared for.

Relationships between senior leaders and governors are positive and constructive. Governors play an active role in checking the pace of school improvement with school staff.

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 Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens  
**His Majesty's Inspector**