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Nigel Biddle
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Dear Mr Biddle

Special measures monitoring inspection of Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU)

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 January 2023.

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 management committee 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. I also visited lessons, spoke with pupils and staff and scrutinised a range of documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU) 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

Since the last monitoring inspection, the headteacher in post at the last graded inspection has left the school. You have continued in your role as acting headteacher. An interim campus lead has been appointed in the last week to oversee the work of all schools on the site. A pastoral manager has been seconded from a local academy trust since July 2023 to further support the school's work around behaviour and attitudes.

Leaders have continued to ensure that safeguarding remains a high priority. You have acted swiftly to address the areas for improvement raised at the previous monitoring inspection. You have implemented a more comprehensive induction process, where leaders gather all safeguarding information about a child before they start on the school roll. This includes liaising with designated safeguarding leads at other schools, as well as holding discussions with external professionals and parents and carers. You have strengthened staff training around safeguarding. A full training programme has been put in place for this academic year, which covers key safeguarding topics. This is flexible, to address any concerns that may emerge in the local area. Where the school has a concern about a pupil, you have ensured that referrals have been submitted to the local authority in a timely manner. However, leaders do not record follow-up actions consistently.

You have continued to build on your work to improve behaviour and attitudes at the school. A new positive behaviour and relationships policy has been introduced that provides clear guidelines to staff about how to respond to both positive and negative behaviours. Leaders have communicated their expectations to all stakeholders, including pupils and parents, so that they are fully aware of this new policy. This includes the sanction of suspensions for more serious behaviours. Leaders recognise that, since September, there has been an increase in the number of negative behaviours logged. This is partly due to staff using the school's online system more consistently. While there has been an increase in negative behaviours recorded, there has been a significant reduction in the number of serious behaviour incidents. This has led to a calmer and more orderly atmosphere throughout the school. Leaders have set higher classroom expectations and staff are logging more positive behaviours. That said, you recognise that there is more work to do to improve transitions between lessons and behaviour for learning during lessons.

Attendance remains an area of concern, and something that is not improving quickly enough. Leaders closely monitor and track attendance to identify patterns and trends. The school is working closely with pupils and families to provide attendance support; in some cases, this is having a positive impact. However, for a significant minority of pupils, their attendance has not improved since starting at the school. While leaders are holding meetings about individual pupils who are struggling to get into school regularly, there is a lack of precision in the targets and actions that are set to help improve attendance. This includes pupils who are on part-time timetables.

You and your team have implemented a new curriculum this year. This offers a suitable range of qualifications in different pathways for pupils to choose. However, significant

weaknesses remain around the quality of pupils' learning in English and mathematics. The curriculum in these subjects is still being developed and does not outline fully how learning is sequenced effectively to help pupils build towards clear end-points. There is a lack of clarity in the way teachers assess pupils in these subjects. Consequently, teachers do not adapt the curriculum well to take account of pupils' starting points. In mathematics, the school is in the process of changing to a new scheme of work, but leaders are unclear how this will be implemented to build on what pupils already know. In English, the curriculum is disjointed, and the school has not thought carefully about how it is designed to prepare pupils fully for the qualifications they offer. In addition to this, there are inconsistencies in the way the curriculum is implemented in lessons. Leaders know there is a significant amount of work still to do in this area.

The school has not acted quickly enough to provide support for pupils who struggle with reading. As part of the induction process, pupils are assessed to identify their reading and comprehension age. However, this information is not used further to identify precisely what gaps pupils have in their reading ability. The school has not put in place a suitable package of support to help improve pupils' reading, including for those who have gaps in their phonics knowledge. As a result, some pupils continue to struggle to access large parts of the curriculum.

The school has appropriate screening tools to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities when they arrive. Leaders use this screening to help devise individual learning plans for every child and provide targets linked to their social and emotional development. These targets are reviewed on a termly basis. Teachers received some training on adaptive teaching at the start of term to help inform their teaching practice. However, pupils' learning plans do not identify the support pupils need to help develop their basic academic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Additionally, leaders are still in the early stages of checking whether staff are using these learning plans effectively to adapt tasks in the classroom.

There have been sensible changes to governance arrangements since the last monitoring inspection. A new interim education board has been set up that meets on a two-weekly cycle. The board provides support and challenge to leaders on the actions they are taking. It recognises that the quality of education is not where it needs to be. As a result, it is setting up a separate curriculum board with responsibility to focus specifically on this area of the school's work.

The school has continued to receive support from a multi-academy trust. The trust has sought the expertise of two school improvement partners. They have been working closely with leaders since September 2023. You have valued the feedback received from your improvement partners and the contribution they have made to help the school improve. The local authority continues to visit the school to monitor its progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes
His Majesty's Inspector