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17 January 2024

Jenny Cave
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Dear Mrs Cave

Special measures monitoring inspection of Farnborough Grange Nursery & Infant Community School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 5 and 6 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, Sue Cox, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We also spoke with members of the interim academy board and the chief executive officer. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also visited lessons, met with staff and reviewed a range of documents during our visit. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Farnborough Grange Nursery & Infant Community School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made insufficient progress to improve the school.

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 last monitoring visit in June 2023, there have been some changes to staffing in the school, but the leadership team remains the same. You continue to work with the support of the trust and the interim academy board. There are ongoing changes to leadership structures in the trust with the aim of providing more specialised support to its schools. We reviewed your improvement plans and self-evaluation of the school's progress, which have been adapted over time. In general, the school and trust have an accurate understanding of the areas that are further ahead, particularly in relation to the quality of education provided. However, there are some areas where necessary improvements have not been identified or acted on with sufficient urgency. There is a lack of capacity in the school to make further progress in these areas without additional support from the trust.

The intention of this second monitoring visit was to focus on: the quality of the curriculum, including in reading; the provision for pupils in early years; and the quality of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). During the inspection, we identified that the school is facing challenges with managing some pupils' behaviour. As a result, we also looked closely at work in this area and how staff are supported to manage behaviour effectively.

The school, with the support of the trust, continues to make improvements to the planned curriculum. There is now evidence of strong curriculum thinking, and it is clear what you expect pupils to learn from the early years through to Year 2. You recognise that some of this work has been developed recently and that the impact on what pupils know and remember is still emerging. Although there have been some notable steps forward with the planned curriculum, the full impact of these is not always felt because it is common for learning to be disrupted by pupils' behaviour.

The way that assessment is used in the school has also improved. Newly developed systems are being used to find out what pupils already know and identify any misconceptions. There is early evidence that this work is having an impact. For example, it is influencing the way that teachers deliver the curriculum to pupils. However, it is too early to see the impact that this is having on pupils' learning.

The school's approach to teaching reading is increasingly well embedded. Staff are trained and generally use consistent approaches when teaching children to read. There remain some significant gaps in the learning of many pupils, including some with SEND, because improvements to the curriculum are recent. These pupils' needs are identified accurately by the school and they receive effective support to help them catch up. The strength of the work the school is doing in this area is not yet reflected in its published outcomes, which remain very low.

The quality of the curriculum experienced by children in early years has not improved quickly enough. Although there are well-considered written plans, these are not yet implemented effectively. Many of the activities provided for children are not sufficiently

engaging or linked to what they need to know. When children work closely with adults, they benefit from high-quality interactions. However, sometimes children do not engage with the full range of activities and are not redirected. This means that the curriculum experience for children in both Reception and Nursery is not as broad or rich as it should be.

In general, there are high expectations of pupils with SEND. Plans identify their needs precisely and set out the key strategies for those adults who work with them. Following training and support, staff in school have developed a better understanding of pupils and their needs. However, in some instances, expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are too low. Some pupils with SEND do not experience a full and ambitious curriculum because not enough demand is placed on them to engage in learning.

Since the last inspection, the school has increased opportunities for structured play at breaktimes and lunch times. This has had a positive impact on the way children behave and interact with each other in the playground. For example, pupils learn to play well together by taking part in team games and sports.

Staff are not adequately supported by leadership and systems in the school when managing challenging behaviour during lesson times. Although leaders have developed plans and policies for supporting pupils with their behaviour, these have not been implemented consistently or effectively across the school. Procedures to follow up on poor behaviour are not routinely followed. Despite recent training for staff, there remains a lack of clarity about expectations and systems for managing behaviour in school. The majority of teaching staff have not been provided with the training they need to respond to the most challenging behaviours appropriately. This variability means that behaviour is not always managed well in school. It is common for learning to be disrupted as a result.

Leaders continue to engage with support from the trust. The interim academy board provides appropriate challenge in most areas. For example, the board asks questions about the impact of new initiatives. However, the trust and the interim academy board have not, until this inspection, recognised the scale of some of the issues, particularly around managing challenging behaviours. They have not ensured that the school has the capacity and support needed to address very challenging pupil behaviours with enough urgency.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim academy board, and the chief executive officer of The Good Shepherd multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Ellison
His Majesty's Inspector