

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 January 2024

Sarah Storer
Headteacher
Holgate Meadows School
Lindsay Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S5 7WE

Dear Mrs Storer

Special measures monitoring inspection of Holgate Meadows School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 13 and 14 December 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in July 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, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders and staff 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 met remotely with the chair of the transition board and spoke on the telephone with two representatives from the local authority. I spoke to some staff and pupils, toured the school and visited some lessons. I met with the director for education for Nexus Multi-Academy Trust. I scrutinised a range of documentation and spoke on the telephone with some parents. 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.

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, some staff have left the school. Some staff have started new roles within the school. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed. These changes are bringing increased rigour to the implementation of your development priorities. The process of joining a multi-academy trust is once more delayed. Essential maintenance work to the school building is to be undertaken before the school can join the multi-academy trust.

Leaders are continuing to strengthen the teaching of reading. Pupils have helped to choose books for the school's new libraries. Time each day is set aside for pupils to read for pleasure and to listen to adults reading. Pupils are beginning to talk about the books and authors that they enjoy.

Leaders have identified that some pupils cannot access the existing curriculum. Some pupils find new learning too difficult because they have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders are acting swiftly to address this weakness. They have revised and redesigned the curriculum content. This new curriculum will be implemented from the beginning of the spring term. However, teachers do not use the information contained in pupils' education, health and care plans to support learning. They cannot be sure that the curriculum is accurately meeting pupils' individual learning needs. Leaders recognise that this is an important next step.

Leaders' recent actions are resulting in improvements in pupils' behaviour. Improvements to the school environment have helped pupils to develop respect for school property. High expectations for pupils' behaviour are being established and sustained. The school is now a calm place in which to learn. Pupils now get the right support and guidance to manage their anxiety and emotions. Incidents of poor behaviour are reducing. Pupils feel safe in school. They receive good-quality pastoral care. Pupils value the trusted adults whom they can talk to in school if they are worried.

Pupils' attendance remains high priority for the school. A large proportion of pupils are persistently absent. Leaders are not complacent. They have redoubled their efforts to tackle pupils' absence. The school is working with support from the local authority to develop effective ways forward. These include training for staff to work with families. Pupils with high levels of anxiety are supported to access learning in the school's new 'Green Room' class. These actions are beginning to have a positive impact on the attendance of some pupils. However, leaders know that there is much more to do.

Leaders and staff are genuinely determined to improve the school. They are making considerable progress towards this ambition. Most staff are proud to work here. They appreciate the training that leaders provide for their professional development. Most feel well supported by leaders for their workload and well-being. Members of the transition

board who act for the interim executive board continue to fulfil their role well. They check often on the progress of improvement work. A multi-academy trust provides significant support, advice and guidance to the school.

Leaders have continued to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive suitable training. They receive frequent reminders about potential risks to pupils and how to report and act on safeguarding concerns. Leaders have established effective working relationships with external agencies to support pupils in a timely way.

Leaders work closely with local authority officers to review and discuss strategies to reduce persistent absence and the number of pupils accessing alternative provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
His Majesty's Inspector