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Melanie Garlick
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Dear Mrs Garlick

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oak CofE Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 23 and 24 January 2024, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in October 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, Jo Robinson, Ofsted Inspector (OI) and I discussed with you, your deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the interim executive board and representatives of the local authority, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We met with school leaders to discuss improvements made to the school's curriculum. We visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, discussed learning with pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's single central record. We also discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Prior to the last inspection, there had been a great deal of turbulence in the leadership and governance of the school. Your appointment in April 2023, and the addition of new members to the interim executive board (IEB), has enabled the school to create a stable leadership team. This team is working together effectively to overcome barriers and develop wider leadership roles within the school.

Since joining the school, you have worked with external support professionals to put clear, decisive plans in place. These set out ambitious targets for immediate and future improvement. You have prioritised the development of a team of leaders who are now confident to share the responsibilities for this improvement. However, much of what you have implemented is very new. This means that, while green shoots of improvement are there, it is too early to see the impact of the changes that you have made. There is a well-understood vision for improvement, shared by all stakeholders. Systematic monitoring systems have been introduced, which closely track what is happening across the school. This enables the IEB to hold school leaders to account for improvement.

There is a shared recognition that pupils previously were not getting an acceptable standard of education. It is evident that leaders and staff are ambitious for the school. This is seen in your work, which is improving the quality of education and thereby pupils' life chances. You see this as central to the strategic decisions that are being made.

You, and your team, show determination to improve outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. You have supported the development of subject leaders for these areas. These leaders work effectively, with both internal and external support, to identify new approaches, monitor implementation and track pupils' progress closely.

You have worked with determination to implement a broad and balanced curriculum. You have revisited, or introduced, new schemes of work for all subjects, across all year groups. This is ensuring that all subjects in the national curriculum are taught throughout the school consistently. With support from external partners, new subject leaders are developing the confidence to monitor the implementation of these schemes.

Ongoing training for staff, to develop their subject knowledge, has been prioritised. You encourage staff to work together to identify how the commercial curriculum schemes can be used with best effect to support pupils' learning over time. However, much of this work is in the earliest stages. In wider curriculum areas, there is still more to be done to support teachers to consistently plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils. Assessment systems are still being developed and finalised. Further consideration is needed to ensure that pupils' gaps and misconceptions are addressed promptly so that they are able to learn more over time.

The improvements you have made in the teaching of phonics and reading across the school since the last inspection are clear. A new reading scheme of work, introduced in

Key Stage 2, is starting to interest and engage pupils. However, there is still more to do to ensure that the school's curriculum is broken down into the right building blocks to aid future learning across pupils' time in school, and within each year group.

In phonics, you have retrained staff across the school to follow the school's chosen phonics approach with more consistency. Staff now implement early reading sessions with confidence. However, due to the legacy of inconsistent practice, there are still significant numbers of pupils across school who need extra support with reading. Currently, all pupils with gaps in learning are given extra lessons daily to help them to catch up. The school is monitoring this closely to ensure that all pupils are supported to get back on track.

Since the last inspection, you have sought expert advice and guidance to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is needed, as the school has increased numbers of pupils with SEND and is seeing a greater complexity of needs. You, and your team, have risen to this challenge. There are many green shoots to be seen with SEND provision. The school now identifies pupils' needs quickly and effectively. Support plans are implemented that enable staff to support pupils to learn alongside their peers. However, there is still more to do to ensure that learning is adapted more effectively in the classroom and that there is less variability in the use of resources or support offered. The school is developing a complex communication and interaction (CCI) room, with advice given by the local authority SEND team. This aims to ensure that individual needs are well understood and addressed both within the mainstream and CCI room.

Alongside the development of the curriculum, you have implemented new policies and practices around behaviour management and attendance. This is leading to an increasingly calm and orderly school. However, while behaviour for learning was seen to be positive in classrooms, there is more to do to support pupils at less-structured times of the school day. A minority of pupils do not yet understand the new policies. Additionally, some pupils report that when bullying happens, they do not feel that it is always resolved.

To support teachers to implement the curriculum, you have utilised support from your proposed academy sponsor effectively. There is a feeling of optimism amongst staff. They feel appreciated and well supported to implement new practices, while maintaining a manageable workload.

The IEB is committed to supporting the school. Members share your vision for further improvement. They provide challenge to you, and scrutiny of the school's improvement plans. IEB members are working closely with the local authority and prospective academy sponsors to secure future stability. This is needed to enable you to continue to embed the positive changes that you have made.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrea Batley
His Majesty's Inspector