

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



23 May 2024

Moira Loftus  
Interim Executive Headteacher  
Well Lane Primary School  
Park Road  
Tranmere  
Birkenhead  
Merseyside  
CH42 5PF

Dear Mrs Loftus

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Well Lane Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 30 April and 1 May 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 June 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, staff, governors 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 made visits to some lessons, observed some pupils read to staff, met with a group of pupils and considered some of the school's documentation. 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 inspection of June 2023, the previous headteacher, some staff and governors have left the school. Some new staff and governors have been recruited. The local authority has commissioned a multi-academy trust to provide an interim headteacher and two heads of school to lead the school. The school has reorganised and strengthened its staffing, including for senior leadership, individual curriculum subjects, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. The school is in the process of transitioning to become part of the trust.

The school has taken swift action to overhaul the ways in which it collaborates with staff and educates pupils. It has started to address its deep-rooted failings with rigour, honesty and fairness. The school has transformed itself into a place where staff are beginning to believe in themselves. It has made some positive improvements in the design, delivery and impact of the curriculum as well as to pupils' behaviour. The school's actions to improve its work are establishing a firm foundation on which it can build further improvement.

The school has combined the findings of the previous inspection with its own precise analysis to identify the areas that need to improve. This approach is shaped by the school's ambitious vision of what high-quality primary education looks like. Staff are now well informed by the school about the priorities for their work. They are starting to better understand the contribution that they need to make to important aspects of the quality of education that it provides.

The school has acted carefully to improve the quality of its curriculum. The adopted subject curriculums contain essential knowledge that is taught to pupils in a logical order. Staff are starting to follow the school's guidance closely. New high-quality resources are helping staff to make pupils' learning more memorable, for example about the First World War in history. The school is focusing much more successfully on the early identification and effective support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' learning needs are more accurately met than previously. Their experience of the curriculum is improving.

The school has started to provide staff, including those who lead subjects, with an extensive and ongoing programme of training about curriculum subjects. It is beginning to support pupils' learning of subject content more effectively. Pupils are gaining more subject knowledge, more securely than they did previously. For example, they recall learning about the Battle of the Somme in history and the human life cycle in science. Nevertheless, several pupils have large gaps in some of their knowledge because of previously weak learning of the curriculum.

Pupils' learning of the school's chosen phonics programme is more effective than at the time of the previous inspection. This is because the school has made sure that all staff involved in teaching phonics are trained to deliver the phonics curriculum. The school has

sharpened its attention on supporting the weakest readers. For instance, it now provides these pupils with much more regular and helpful reading practice.

The school has adopted a new reading curriculum which is already inspiring staff and pupils much more about reading chosen texts. Staff are beginning to read books to pupils with more careful thought about building pupils' memory of characters, book language and storyline. Pupils now experience a richer repertoire of stories. However, due to previous weaknesses in the reading curriculum, pupils do not easily recall different authors and their works. This means that pupils are not fully ready for studying the English curriculum at secondary school.

Pupils' behaviour at the school is improving well. Following training and improved guidance to staff, teachers now address rather than deflect behaviour issues. They support individual pupils better and there is a greater consistency of approach between classes. Pupils can explain what staff expect of their behaviour because the school helps them to understand its rules. As a result of the improving behaviour of their peers, pupils can focus more on their learning.

The school has introduced many well-considered strategies to promote, review and recognise pupils' good attendance. For example, it now monitors the attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils very carefully to inform its actions. Pupils' unauthorised absences are not acceptable to the school. The proportion of pupil absences is starting to decline.

Pupils develop a reasonable understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. However, pupils have a limited knowledge about different families and how to keep themselves healthy. This is because of weaknesses in the school's previous programme to support their personal development. Pupils do not develop some of the knowledge that they need for their lives as modern British citizens.

The school's revised approach to its curriculum includes the early years. It is starting to think more carefully about the knowledge, including vocabulary, that staff teach to children. Children are learning important information about the wider world, for example observing snails and making drawings of them.

The governing body has supported the school effectively to manage some important aspects of its work since the previous inspection. It knows that, through links with the trust, the school has made considerable and positive changes to its leadership, curriculum and pupils' behaviour. However, governors are not challenging the school's work effectively enough to aid its continued development.

The school has made successful use of the support available through the local authority and the trust. For instance, teachers now participate in subject-specific networks with other schools from the trust. These opportunities are enthusing and better informing teachers at the school about its curriculum content. Teachers are developing a greater

sense of how to become a successful teacher. The school is improving its leadership skills, as well as its subject and curriculum expertise.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan  
**His Majesty's Inspector**