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4 June 2024

Matthew Penn
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Penn

Special measures monitoring inspection of Great Alne Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 8 and 9 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 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, other staff, governors and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I also carried out visits to lessons, meetings with staff, discussions with pupils, reviews of pupils' work, and scrutiny of a range of other documents. 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

There have been further changes in the leadership of the school since the previous monitoring inspection. You joined the school as substantive headteacher in December 2023. The interim headteacher who worked at the school between April and December 2023 continues to support the school. This arrangement has worked well. You have maintained a sharp focus on addressing weaknesses in provision and have already made a significant difference to the pace of school improvement work. Nevertheless, you recognise that there is much work left to do before your vision for the school is realised.

The school had recently adopted a new curriculum that was in the very early stages of implementation at the time of the previous inspection. Since then, teachers have taught the curriculum's content regularly and pupils have benefited from learning a broad range of subjects. This means that pupils are beginning to build subject specific knowledge and remember more about the subjects they study. However, now that the curriculum is becoming more embedded, you have identified that there is a need to make further improvements to better suit the context of the school. For example, in some subjects, staff are not clear about how pupils in mixed-aged classes build their knowledge logically over time. You intend to develop the curriculum further, to better identify the significant knowledge that pupils are expected to know for them to make progress through the curriculum.

The school's work to develop staff's expertise has begun to make a positive difference. Your work to train and coach teachers is deepening their subject knowledge and helping to improve the way that the curriculum is implemented, particularly in mathematics and English. As a result, there has been a notable boost in teachers' confidence. However, there remains some variation in staff's expertise. For example, in some subjects, staff do not make accurate checks on what pupils know and remember over time. You intend to continue prioritising professional development opportunities to ensure that staff implement the curriculum consistently well.

You have placed serious emphasis on further improving the teaching of reading. All pupils at the early stages of learning to read continue to have daily phonics lessons as part of a systematic approach. In addition, you have focused on improving all pupils' ability to comprehend what they read. This focus has included you introducing additional class reading sessions. In these sessions, staff use carefully selected texts to build pupils' knowledge and stimulate class discussions. Pupils also appreciate having access to a new school library. A renewed enthusiasm and love of reading is beginning to build in the school.

You are ensuring that the school continues to improve the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A new policy has been introduced that sets out clearer roles and responsibilities for staff since the last monitoring inspection. These raised expectations are beginning to make a positive difference. The school's approach to identifying pupils' needs is better organised and adults are identifying pupils' needs more accurately. However, new approaches are not yet fully embedded and

further work is needed to develop staff's expertise in adapting the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.

The school has taken action to improve the opportunities for pupils' personal development. This action has included embedding the teaching of personal, social and health education. You have consulted with parents and ensured that the statutory requirement for relationships and sex education and health education is now being met. In addition, you have begun to plan wider opportunities such as educational trips and visits to enrich the curriculum. However, you recognise the need for further work to improve pupils' personal development. Although several initiatives have been introduced, the school's approach is not yet organised as part of a fully coherent curriculum.

Your executive presence since joining the school has been a significant factor in further improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils know and understand the school's expectation for everyone to be 'Responsible, Respectful, Ready'. Routines are now well established, and pupils typically follow the rules. Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving, although sometimes pupils do still lose focus in lessons.

You have rightly identified that some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. You have increased the challenge and support given to families and are starting to communicate clearer expectations for all pupils to attend regularly.

The school's work to strengthen safeguarding procedures has been maintained since the last monitoring inspection. Safeguarding procedures continue to be effective. The school's safeguarding culture makes safeguarding everyone's responsibility.

Governors have sustained their focus on school improvement. They especially understand the importance of further improving the quality of education for pupils. There are now strengthened procedures in place for governors to review progress against the school's action plan. These procedures include governors considering a range of useful information about the school's performance. For instance, they welcome evaluative reports from the local authority, along with the guidance provided through the support of a local multi-academy trust. This support is making a positive difference in helping governors to drive school improvement forward.

Your leadership has re-energised the school community. Parents, staff and pupils recognise the recent improvements that have been made and are eager to support the school to effect further change. Staff's morale has been raised and there is now a shared vision for the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Leonard
His Majesty's Inspector