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Gemma Draycott  
Chief Executive Officer  
Crowmoor Primary School and Nursery  
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Dear Gemma Draycott

## **Special measures monitoring inspection of Crowmoor Primary School and Nursery**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 14 and 15 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 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, Ann Pritchard, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you, other senior leaders from Shine Academies multi-academies trust, the interim executive board (IEB) 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. We also scrutinised documentation for improvement planning, governance and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We met with staff, visited lessons, scrutinised books and spoke to pupils. 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**

At the time of the previous inspection the substantive headteacher was absent and the school was led by an acting headteacher. The school began to receive support from Shine Academies in April 2023. An IEB was appointed by the Department for Education in July 2023. The trust became the nominated sponsor and took control of school improvement in October 2023. In October 2023 a new acting headteacher was appointed. A new head of school will take up a permanent position in September 2024.

When Shine Academies started to support the school you discovered shortcomings in some safeguarding processes. These were promptly addressed but it took some time to fully resolve the issues. Safeguarding is now effective. You, the staff team and the trust have worked diligently to improve safeguarding including improving the security of the site and ensuring record keeping is robust. All staff have now had appropriate training in safeguarding. Any concerns raised are acted on swiftly by the school and parents are informed. As a result, staff feel better trained in safeguarding and are now confident that leaders will follow up concerns effectively.

Planned improvements to the quality of education initially slowed while this happened. Since then, the school's curriculum has been completely reviewed. You have ensured that the curriculum now maps out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn progressively in a sensible order. However, you recognise that the curriculum is still at the early stages of implementation in some subjects. While younger pupils are making much better progress as they experience the revised curriculum from the start of their education, older pupils still have gaps in their learning from the previous weaker provision. In addition to this, the oldest pupils still have gaps from the loss of learning through the COVID period.

You have ensured there has been immediate action to address the issues identified in reading and phonics at the last inspection. You have made effective use of support from the English hub and other phonics leads from within the trust. The school is developing staff expertise in teaching phonics with high quality support and training. The effective teaching of phonics and reading in the younger age groups is now enabling pupils to make much better progress in learning to read. The work to develop pupils' love of reading has been particularly successful. However, some pupils in older age groups still have gaps in their phonic knowledge and still require additional support to help them catch up to become fluent and confident readers.

Following some staffing changes there is now stable and effective staffing in the early years. Highly effective support from the trust early years lead is helping to develop the provision at pace. The leaders work collaboratively together, and this is strengthening

improvement planning, with focused support plans identifying the key areas to develop. There has been recent investment in resources in Reception and pupils now have access to the equipment and materials they need to learn well. This is already showing a positive impact in terms of improving the quality of the provision. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go to ensure that all children in the early years receive the best possible education to enable them to reach their full potential.

The trust's support has been instrumental in improving the provision for pupils with SEND. Previously the school was not meeting the needs of these pupils. Some parents and carers were rightly unhappy about the provision for their children. The trust identified that while there were positive relationships between pupils and staff, this did not translate into effective support for the most vulnerable. To address this, there has been a key focus on training for staff to identify pupils' needs and adapt teaching so pupils can make better progress. Pupils with SEND are now getting effective support but there is some way to go to catch up from the shortcomings of previous SEND provision.

Staff at all levels appreciate the training and support they have received recently. You have ensured that this training has focused on what is best for the pupils. Staff appreciate the child-centred approach to the new curriculum. They say that it has helped them to improve their practice. You have provided subject leaders with time, training and support to develop and improve their leadership skills. Subject leaders have benefited from opportunities to work with other leaders across the trust. This is improving their capacity and confidence to monitor how well pupils are achieving. Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done to ensure that the curriculum is delivered expertly so that all pupils achieve well. Staff are fully committed to the planned school improvements. While there has been an increase in workload to implement the changes to the curriculum, staff know that this work will lead to long term dividends for the quality of education for pupils.

Attendance has become everyone's responsibility since the last inspection. A family liaison officer has been appointed to enhance the school's work to address persistent absence for some pupils. You recognise that there is more to do to continue to improve the attendance of some pupils.

The interim period has been sensitively and skilfully led by the current acting headteacher. Her leadership has been highly effective, and her work has been valued by staff. Staff morale has improved markedly as a result. Staff now know that their well-being is considered. They feel that leaders are approachable and particularly value the openness in listening and responding to their views.

The trust has provided exceptional support. You and the trust have been tenacious in addressing the important changes that needed to be made. The work undertaken to improve the school has been carefully considered and informed by well-constructed and purposeful improvement plans. The interim executive board has provided a wealth of experience to oversee the improvements made. Members share your vision for further improvement. They provide challenge to you and other leaders. 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 Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Corinne Biddell  
**His Majesty's Inspector**