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13 June 2024

Sarah Storer
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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 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in March 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, Alison Stephenson, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and 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. We also met with the chair of the transition board and spoke on the telephone with a school improvement partner and two representatives from the local authority. We toured the school, visited some lessons and spoke to some staff and pupils. We looked at samples of pupils' work and scrutinised a range of documentation. I met with the director for education for NEXUS Multi Academy Trust. We considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and carers and staff. 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 two early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Your school is now a pleasant environment where pupils feel safe and establish trusting and positive relationships with staff. The way in which staff support pupils to manage their behaviour has strengthened further. There is now an embedded and consistent approach. Your leadership team has made sure that there are increasingly high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand these expectations. They develop strategies to help them to express their emotions and consider the consequences of their behaviour. They are confident to talk to staff and appreciate the support they provide. Pupils receive valuable pastoral support to meet their social, emotional and mental health needs.

After the last monitoring inspection, your school implemented an interim curriculum. This is because leaders identified that some pupils could not access the existing curriculum. Pupils found learning difficult because they had gaps in their knowledge. Two distinct pathways for learning have been developed. However, the interim curriculum is not consistently well implemented. In some subjects, pupils experience a disconnected series of lessons. Lessons sometimes do not accurately reflect your school's intended learning. This makes it difficult for pupils to build and develop their knowledge over time. Teachers do not check well enough what pupils know and can do in some subjects. This means that learning is not matched well enough to what pupils need to know. Some pupils continue to build on gaps in their knowledge and develop misconceptions. You and your leaders recognise the significant weaknesses in the quality of education. You know that staff need further support and professional development to improve their knowledge and skills. There are suitably ambitious plans to introduce a new curriculum, train staff and improve the quality of education. This work is scheduled to be implemented from the beginning of the next academic year.

Your school has sensibly prioritised identifying and supporting pupils' early reading needs. You recognise that when pupils arrive at the school they are in the earliest stages of learning to read, or struggling to read. The school's phonics programme is established. Staff have received training to teach phonics to pupils when necessary. It is positive to see pupils enjoying a variety of texts and engaging in reading lessons. They are encouraged to enjoy reading for pleasure every day. However, your leaders understand that there is further work needed to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and confidence to teach phonics consistently well and to ensure that reading for pleasure is promoted effectively.

Persistent absence remains an ongoing and significant concern for your school. Your leaders continue to work hard to promote the importance of regular attendance and to follow up absences. They analyse patterns of attendance for individual pupils closely. They work with pupils, their parents and external agencies to identify ways to encourage pupils into school. Their actions continue to have an increasingly positive impact on the

attendance of some pupils. More pupils recognise the benefits of attending the school and enjoy their time there. For example, pupils take part in a range of activities in the local and wider community. They enjoy the variety of sports your school provides. Pupils and staff particularly enjoyed their visit to the theatre together, to watch the musical 'West Side Story'.

Your school has remained resolute in its determination to ensure that the school is a safe and calm place for pupils to learn in. Your safeguarding leaders are tenacious in their approach to keeping pupils safe. The culture of safeguarding remains secure. The school makes sure that staff are kept abreast of risks to pupils. Your school has further developed and improved the working relationships with external agencies to ensure that help for pupils and their families is provided promptly and effectively.

Your school's transition board continues to provide appropriate challenge and support to improve. Local authority officers are now working more purposefully with your school. A multi-academy trust continues to provide valuable support, advice and guidance to the school. Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of your leaders. They appreciate that leaders listen to them and are considerate of their welfare. They also appreciate that the school is improving, and they enjoy working as part of the close-knit staff team.

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