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Rachel Pattison
Executive Head teacher
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Dear Mrs Pattison,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Marpool Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 16-17 July 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 on 27-28 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, Susan Aykin, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and Julie Barton, Ofsted Inspector (OI), discussed with you, other senior leaders, members of the Cornerstone Academy Trust, a representative of the local authority and vice chair and chair of the governing body 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 observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, met with groups of pupils, visited lessons and conducted meetings with staff and parents. 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 number should be kept to a minimum of two to ensure that they are able to receive effective support.

Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed new leaders for each subject in the curriculum. The school has worked closely with the Cornerstone Academy Trust and Devon local authority.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the quality of education and the effectiveness of leaders' actions. The changes that leaders have introduced to the teaching of early reading have had significant impact. Staff teach the programme with fidelity, ensuring that pupils and children in the early years learn to read with success, confidence and enjoyment. Leaders use assessment information effectively to identify pupils who struggle with reading and provide targeted support. In the early years, leaders and staff have prioritised children's language acquisition and development through well-planned activities. Consequently, pupils learn to read well.

The leadership of curriculum subjects has been revised. Curriculum leaders have begun to review the content, use of assessment and the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Leaders have devised plans, but the development of some areas are still in their infancy. Leaders acknowledge that there is still much work to do to improve curriculum design and the quality of teaching and learning in some subjects. For example, in mathematics, teachers' use of assessment is not secure. This results in some pupils struggling, while others are not sufficiently challenged. Staff do not routinely adapt the teaching of mathematics to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn well.

Leaders have audited the needs of the school and established targeted training for staff to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. The impact of this training is not yet fully evident. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support for their wellbeing and workload. Governors gather pertinent information about the progress of the school in addressing the areas for improvement. They provide both challenge and support in equal measure.

The school's safeguarding arrangements ensure that pupils feel safe at school. For instance, leaders have changed lunchtime arrangements which has reduced the number of pupils accessing the dining area and outside space at one time. The management of pupils' behaviour has been prioritised. Consequently, there is less unruly behaviour and most pupils feel safe and well supported. There is a calm and harmonious environment in lessons and around the school. Leaders are vigilant about the physical and emotional safety of pupils.

Leaders have used a breadth of external support to audit the quality of education, the effectiveness of leaders and the management of behaviour. This has identified, with precision, the areas that leaders need to focus on. The actions the school has taken has had some success. For example, the support to manage pupils' behaviour is beginning to

have a positive impact. However, there is still much to do to realise the full impact of leaders' actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin

His Majesty's Inspector