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Dear Robin Bertrand

Special measures monitoring inspection of Woodeaton Manor School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 10 and 11 October 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 November 2023.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, 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, 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 met with other staff, carried out learning walks and lesson visits, reviewed pupils work and support plans and completed a scrutiny on strategic 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 no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous graded inspection in November 2023, there have been substantial changes to the leadership team. These include the appointments of interim headteachers as well as interim deputy headteachers. The interim executive board has appointed a substantive headteacher who will take up this post after the October half term. The interim executive board and the local authority have extended the appointment of some of the interim leadership team. This is to ensure that there is effective continuity in the work being done in line with the school's improvement plan.

There has been some improvement in the quality of education. The school has ensured that there is a coherent curriculum in every subject. The school is currently refining the sequence of knowledge that pupils will learn. Due to ongoing staffing restructure, middle leaders are not yet in place to take the curriculum further forward as the school intend. While teachers have knowledge of what they teach, their knowledge of how to teach effectively is not secure. The school has begun training staff to know what effective teaching looks like. This work is new and, therefore, not yet having an impact. Pupils learning over time is disjointed.

Since the last inspection, the school has put in place a phonics programme. The school check how well pupils can read when they join. Subsequently, the school knows which pupils need extra help to learn to read. However, staff running reading interventions are too often used to cover lessons. This means that most of the pupils who need help with early reading are not getting it.

The school is not meeting their statutory requirements for special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan in place. Previously, staff did not have the knowledge to use EHC plans effectively to support pupils. The school has introduced the 'one page profile' to summarise these plans for staff. However, these are not precise enough and staff still do not know how to make adaptations to support pupils in lessons. The profile does not set out the interim targets and outcomes that will help pupils. The school has also not met with parents at least three times per year to discuss their child's outcomes.

Most notably, the school is not meeting the provision identified in section F of pupils' EHC plans. The school has identified the therapy and provision pupils need. This includes speech and language and occupational therapy. The school has not been able to recruit these professionals or secure training for existing staff so that they can provide this therapeutic input. This means that pupils are not having their needs met. Pupils are not achieving well enough and are not being prepared for their next stage.

The interim executive board are new in post since the last inspection. They have rapidly improved the process for checking the effectiveness of the school. The interim executive board and the local authority's school improvement advisor, regularly visit the school and talk to staff and pupils. They use their extensive professional knowledge to provide additional support and capacity to school leaders. They are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The improvement in some areas has not been as rapid as the interim executive board expect. They have subsequently had to make some difficult, but accurate decisions, to ensure the right staff are in place to make the improvements needed.

Staff do not feel supported and few see any positive impact from the changes made. Many do not believe that they are valued or listened to. They have had a number of headteachers within the past year and are fatigued by the constant changes. While they recognise that the training they receive is important for the school to improve, some feel it is a lot all at once. Leaders have recognised this and have recently set up a staff forum so that changes can be made with staff views in mind.

Safeguarding remains ineffective. Pupils are still too often out of lessons. This behaviour reduces staff capacity and means that pupils are not learning. Most importantly, it poses an additional safeguarding risk to pupils. The immediate improvements to site safety and security that were identified in the last inspection have not all been made. The interim executive board has worked tirelessly to secure these improvements. They have worked well with the local authority to ensure scheduled works take place. However, too much of this work remains incomplete. An ongoing consequence of these site risks is that a small number of pupils are still unable to attend school and are having full time alternative education provision, arranged by the local authority. This has been the case since the previous inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Nina Marabese
His Majesty's Inspector