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David Terry
Interim Headteacher
Danesfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community Middle School
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Dear Mr Terry

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Danesfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community Middle School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on the 11 December 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 took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

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, the interim chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, other trust staff and trustees 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 reviewed records and documents and visited lessons and social spaces. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the school's leadership. You were appointed on an interim basis in July 2024. New senior leaders have been appointed, including an acting deputy headteacher, an associate assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. A number of new middle leadership positions have been created and filled.

Since the last inspection, the school has focused on improving the quality of education. It has ensured that each subject curriculum has clear aims and ambitions, starting in Year 5 and leading to what pupils learn in Year 8. The school has considered carefully pupils' starting points when they join the school, and their next steps when they leave. Work has started to identify precisely the most important knowledge and skills that pupils should know and remember in each subject. This is now well developed and logically ordered in some subjects, although further work is required in others. The school has also focused on improving the quality of staff's teaching. This has started to enhance the implementation of the curriculum. Some of the improvements to the implementation of the curriculum are in their early stages of development. It is, therefore, too soon to evaluate their impact.

The school is determined to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that pupils' needs are identified and assessed accurately, including for pupils with particular behaviour needs. The school has strengthened the information it provides to teachers to help them to meet pupils' needs. This work has started to inform suitable adaptations to the curriculum. The school has designed a new programme of support for pupils who need help learning to read. It understands the priority that should be given to reading to provide pupils with a foundation for learning the rest of the curriculum. However, these improvements to ensure that the curriculum better meets pupils' needs are in their infancy.

Trustees, trust leaders and school leaders are prioritising the right improvements. They have strengthened leadership at the school and are sharply focused on improving the curriculum for all pupils. Trustees have ensured that the school has the resources and help that it needs, including from external support. The school benefits from the advice of external experts in recognising where it is improving, as well as helping to indicate where further attention is needed. Trustees have strengthened their oversight of the school's progress against its improvement plans. These plans are clear and precise. Trustees are now providing the right balance of support and challenge. It is crucial that they maintain this balance to ensure that improvements to the quality of the school's work are sustained.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the interim CEO of the Beacon Academy multi academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

James Oldham
His Majesty's Inspector