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4 February 2025

Oona Gilbertson  
Executive Headteacher  
Elton CofE Primary School  
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Elton  
Matlock  
Derbyshire  
DE4 2BW

Dear Mrs Gilbertson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Elton CofE Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 21 and 22 January 2025, 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 May 2024.

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, Andrew Monaghan, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you, staff, 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. We also visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, met with pupils and scrutinised documents related to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, governance and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). 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 school should take further action to:

- ensure that staff have the necessary expertise to implement the school's early reading programme.

**The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

You started in your role as executive headteacher at Elton CofE Primary School in June 2024. You also have leadership oversight of another school. The school's local governing body is seeking to extend the length of time that you will work with this school. There have been very few changes to the staff team or the local governing body.

After an initial delay, leaders now recognise the need for significant change across many aspects of the school's provision, including the school's curriculum. Staff and governors now have an accurate understanding of what needs to improve. It is clear the school wants to provide a better education for all its pupils.

The school is in the process of moving to a new early reading programme. The current programme does not meet the needs of all the pupils at the school. It is not taught with accuracy. Not all pupils learn to read. When selecting the new programme, leaders have ensured that it has a strong emphasis on enabling pupils with SEND to learn to read. New reading books align closely to the different stages of the programme. Further training will support staff to teach the programme as intended. Pupils will begin following this programme imminently.

You recognise the ongoing need to improve the curriculum. In some subjects, the school has adopted commercial schemes of work. This has made a positive difference. The school's curriculum now matches the breadth and ambition of the National Curriculum. It is well organised to support pupils who learn in mixed-age classes. Teachers ensure that lessons are taught logically. Pupils are beginning to recall important knowledge, despite the curriculum being in its early stages of implementation. The early years curriculum is currently being revised to ensure that concepts, vocabulary and language are organised carefully.

The school strives to be inclusive for all. A significant amount of leaders' work has been to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. This work is not complete. Leaders have reconsidered the roles and responsibilities of staff to support pupils with SEND. The local authority has also provided some help. When necessary, teachers seek advice from external agencies when making adaptations to the curriculum. This allows pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers for parts of the school day.

Staff support the school's actions that are leading to improvements. They are optimistic and recognise the positive impact of the recent changes. They appreciate leaders' actions to seek their views and consider their workload during this period of rapid change. They are proud of what has been accomplished so far. Staff welcome the recent training opportunities. These opportunities have started to enhance the quality of education for pupils at the school.

Governance at the school is improving. The local governing body now has systems in place to ensure that the information they receive about the school is accurate. They are embracing further training opportunities to understand their roles and responsibilities fully. Governors are determined to ensure that the current improvements lead to lasting and sustainable changes for the school.

Leaders have rightly prioritised improving pupils' behaviour and safety. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The school has implemented a new online filtering and monitoring system. Governors are starting to ask appropriate questions to check on pupils' welfare and safety. They are beginning to make more precise checks on the school's safeguarding systems and procedures. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are now effective.

Clear routines and expectations have led to improvements in pupils' conduct. For example, changes to the routines at the start of the day has improved pupils' punctuality. In turn, this ensures that the school site is safe and secure. Parents and carers accept and adhere to the new arrangements well. Pupils say they feel accepted at the school because they all 'belong'. They are confident that all staff will listen and resolve their worries and concerns. They say that the recent changes have impacted behaviour and safety positively. Leaders continue to make checks to ensure that all systems for behaviour and safeguarding are fully embedded.

The plans to improve the school are suitably specific. They set out the actions needed to bring about necessary improvements. You, alongside the governors and the local authority, work to ensure that the actions are addressed in a systematic manner. You understand what has been accomplished and acknowledge that further work remains to fully address the recommendations made at the previous inspection. You continue to work with determination to ensure that the school's values and ambitions are realised.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of Derby, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

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Shaheen Hussain  
**His Majesty's Inspector**