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22 October 2025

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Dear Mr Lawrence

Special measures monitoring inspection of Pyrland School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 23 and 24 September 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 January 2025.

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, Susan Aykin, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and I discussed with you, other staff, representatives of the Midsomer Norton School Partnership (MNSP) multi-academy trust and a representative of the local governing board 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 and social times and met with staff and pupils. I also looked at school documents such as the improvement plan. We have considered all this in coming to our 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.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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 inspection there have been substantial changes to the leadership of the school. A new executive headteacher has been appointed, along with an interim governing body. The trust has facilitated additional external support to support the school to improve.

The quality of education that pupils are receiving is rapidly improving. The curriculum now identifies the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Learning is sequenced so that pupils can build on what they already know and can do. The curriculum takes into account the gaps that pupils have as a result of the previous weak curriculum. A new shared approach to assessment has been established so that gaps in learning and progress through the curriculum can be identified.

The school has introduced a new shared approach to teaching to support pupils to learn well. Leaders have particularly considered how teaching can best support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has provided training to develop the expertise of staff in using this new approach and in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are now provided with high-quality information about how to help pupils with SEND to achieve all that they can. However, the quality of curriculum implementation is not consistently strong. Leaders acknowledge that further training of staff is required to ensure that the curriculum has sustained impact.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils read daily to improve their fluency and enjoyment of texts. Pupils who struggle with reading are provided with effective support. A range of strategies, including a new phonics programme, has been implemented to support pupils to read well. This work is still in its infancy. It is too early to determine the impact for pupils.

The graded inspection in January 2025 found that poor behaviour was widespread. This had a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and their ability to learn. Leaders have worked hard to ensure consistent approaches to the management of poor behaviour. Intensive, ongoing staff training and the introduction of strong routines have had a noticeable impact. Pupils now strive to achieve the praise and rewards they receive for meeting the school's raised expectations of them. Typically, there is a harmonious environment in lessons and around the school. Pupils and staff report that behaviour has been transformed. However, these new behaviour policies and practices are not consistently upheld. Pupils continue to experience interruptions to their learning and to feel uncomfortable as a result of the actions of a minority of their peers.

Safeguarding is effective. The school ensures the suitability of adults who work or volunteer in the school. Safeguarding records are used to adapt the curriculum in order to reduce the likelihood of harm. Pupils feel safe at school.

Extensive external support has been provided by the MNSP multi-academy trust. School staff feel that the trust has provided the expertise needed to tackle the serious issues identified at the January 2025 inspection. The school has utilised the resources available to it effectively. This includes working with staff in other schools within the multi-academy trust. Leaders feel that this had been instrumental in supporting the school to develop its curriculum and improve behaviour across the school.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the role of leaders in supporting their well-being and workload while bringing about rapid change. They value the training and ongoing support that they receive to improve the curriculum, the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour.

Governance arrangements are currently interim as the school prepares to move to a new trust. The interim governors provide oversight and scrutiny of the school's actions. They have a detailed understanding of the school's work. However, the interim nature of current arrangements means that it is too early to judge the sustained impact of governance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO of the Richard Huish 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

Sarah Favager-Dalton
His Majesty's Inspector