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5 September 2024

Mr Kevin Medway
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mr Medway

Special measures monitoring inspection of Broadmeadow Infant School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 16 and 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 in March 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, Tim Hill, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the interim executive board (IEB), leaders from the Robin Hood Multi-Academy Trust who are currently providing external support, a representative from Birmingham Education Partnership 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 scrutinised documentation for improvement planning, governance and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We met with staff, visited lessons, scrutinised books, spoke to pupils and listened to pupils read. 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 not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes within the leadership of the school. The substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher at the time of the previous inspection are no longer at the school. Initially, there was an interim headteacher seconded for two days a week for the summer and autumn term 2023. An interim deputy headteacher was seconded full time between April 2023 and July 2024. An IEB was appointed by the Department for Education in October 2023.

Since January 2024, the IEB has put in place a leadership model shared between Broadmeadow Infant and Nursery School and Broadmeadow Junior School. Leaders of the Junior School have taken on interim roles in the infant school. These include the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and family support worker.

A deliberate and decisive focus has been on securing effective leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Currently, this sits with leaders who do not hold substantive posts in the school. The school quickly put in place systems that ensure that pupils' additional needs are accurately identified and, in turn, supported. You have worked with staff to ensure that they become fully skilled in providing the right support for pupils with SEND. On the whole, this is effective, especially for pupils with the most complex needs. You recognise that there is still more to do in ensuring that pupils' individual targets are precise enough and focus on the most important area of need first.

You have ensured there has been immediate action to address the issues identified in reading and phonics at the last inspection. You have made effective use of external support to develop consistent and effective teaching of reading. You are developing staff expertise in teaching phonics through high-quality support and training. You have made brave decisions on the deployment of staff to support the teaching of phonics and provide distinct time for pupils to practise their reading. These are key to improving pupils' outcomes in phonics and reading. Staff value the training they have received in this area. They see themselves as an intrinsic part of the improvement journey and are making a real and positive difference to pupils' success in becoming readers. This starts from Nursery. Leaders are now rigorous and analytical in checking which sounds pupils do and do not know. They use this information wisely to set out the additional support that pupils need. You have ensured that the school is well placed to sustain this improvement into the new academic year.

Leaders, since the previous inspection, recognised that the original personal development offer was very limited. Trips had not resumed following COVID-19 and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum was not fit for purpose. You have taken action to address both of these issues.

You now provide a range of clubs and well-targeted trips that link to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy these. You have set out the PSHE curriculum. It is in its infancy of being delivered consistently well. Pupils show respect and can talk about staying safe in different ways. They are proud of being a member of the school council. Pupils' knowledge of different faiths and those of no faith remains rather limited.

Subject leadership is in the early stages of development. You have rightly decided that other priorities have been more pressing. Your staffing structure for September 2024 has helped to identify some key middle leadership roles, including English, mathematics, early reading and the early years. You are utilising external expertise to strengthen the curriculum. You are increasing the capacity to support this area of development through a secondment position. However, you recognise that further support is needed to ensure that all subject leaders have the skills to develop, support and monitor their subject within the curriculum. You have rightly identified that there is work to do to support and improve the teaching in the classroom before staff take on an extra layer of responsibility for a subject.

A distinct focus since the previous inspection has been on strengthening and refining safeguarding systems, procedures and record-keeping. All staff understand their responsibilities. Any required actions are taken. Your provision of additional staff and expertise has brought greater oversight and checking of actions taken. External audits show that the improvement work on this has ensured that safeguarding is effective.

You have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. You have prioritised the most serious issues first. Since the previous inspection, you and other leaders, in partnership with a range of external support, have maintained a purposeful focus on school improvement. You have made sure that parents, carers and staff have been kept informed. Parents currently have mixed views of how well this is working. They should be reassured that you and your team of interim leaders, the IEB, and those providing external support, all have their child's best interests at heart. You are doing the right things, in the right way and at the right time. Staff recognise the 'mammoth changes' that have occurred. They appreciate the difference that these are making to the pupils and themselves.

Since the previous inspection, there have been various styles of action plans in place which have been sufficient to bring the school thus far. Moving forward, you know you wish to structure the improvement planning so that it has a strong focus on teaching and learning, with clearly defined impact statements.

Members of the IEB and trust leaders have made significant investments into the school, both with time and finances. There is a commitment from all leaders and a moral purpose to ensure that pupils in the local community have access to a high standard of education that ensures they are ready for the next stage of education. Leaders are determined to bring this about. However, they do not shy away from the fact that there is still a significant amount of work needed to further develop the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Foulkes
His Majesty's Inspector