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Dear Ms King

Special measures monitoring inspection of Idsall School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 19 and 20 March 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in September 2022.

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, Jane Epton, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) and the director of education for the trust 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, scrutinised documents, observed breaktimes and lunchtimes, met with groups of staff and groups of pupils, and talked to staff and pupils informally throughout the inspection. 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.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous inspection, there have been further changes to the senior team, including the appointment of a new assistant headteacher responsible for pupils' personal development. In addition to this, one of your recently appointed deputy headteachers has taken on the role of designated safeguarding lead. These changes, alongside adaptations to the roles and responsibilities of your leadership team, have enabled you to continue to focus your attentions on the most important things that still need to improve. You and your leadership team are tackling these in the right order, and at the right pace. At the time of the inspection, there remain a small number of gaps in staffing that you are working to fill. However, you have been successful in recruiting staff to many of the posts that were previously vacant.

Since the last inspection, leaders have been extremely thorough in their analysis of the school's behaviour data. As a leadership team, you now have a clear picture of which pupils struggle to meet the school's expectations and you dig deep to understand the barriers to pupils' good behaviour. Pupils who need further support benefit from a range of bespoke interventions that are carefully tailored to address their individual needs. These are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Alongside this, you have created areas within the school where pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour or engage with their education can seek additional support. This work is helping those who are most at risk of suspension and those who are most disaffected to re-engage with their education. You recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that the work that pupils are given to do when working in these areas enhances their progress through the curriculum as well as their emotional well-being.

Behaviour in lessons remains variable. Low-level disruption persists in too many lessons. While most teachers now challenge poor behaviour, not all do so consistently. This disrupts learning and hinders pupils' progress. You have begun to offer targeted support to staff who require help with managing poor behaviour, and this is beginning to have an impact. You understand there is still work to be done here and have appropriate plans in place to improve this area further.

You have continued to strengthen the provision for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The arrival of the new assistant headteacher responsible for this work has spearheaded this development in recent weeks. The content of the PSHE curriculum is now tightly focused on pupils' needs and takes account of the complex contextual safeguarding risks that some pupils face. The programme is supplemented well by targeted interventions to promote pupils' understanding of pertinent issues such as race and gender discrimination. You have continued to support staff in the delivery of the curriculum. However, the curriculum is not yet implemented consistently well. You have plans to further enhance the PSHE curriculum and are currently reviewing this provision to ensure greater consistency in its implementation. Alongside this, you have also continued to focus your attention on better understanding pupils' views and creating opportunities for pupils to raise concerns with you about their experiences. While pupils told inspectors that incidents of discriminatory behaviour are still too frequent, many pupils now feel

comfortable and confident in raising concerns when they have them. The work you are doing to re-educate those pupils who display discriminatory behaviours is having a positive impact.

The school has been slow to tackle the weaknesses in reading identified at the previous inspection. While you have now identified the specific gaps in pupils' reading, you have only recently begun to provide targeted support to a small number of pupils. This is not wide-reaching enough. Many pupils have yet to receive the support they sorely need to improve their reading. You have created capacity within your team to broaden this provision following the Easter break.

Since the last inspection, you have further refined the school's curriculum. Across most subjects, curriculum plans outline the key knowledge that pupils ought to learn. This knowledge is well ordered so that new learning builds on the things pupils have already been taught. Subject leaders and teachers are developing their use of assessment. Consequently, they are now able to adapt the curriculum more confidently. However, there is more to be done to ensure that assessment is used consistently well across the school.

You have continued to develop the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The 'Wave' approach is now well embedded. This is ensuring that all aspects of a pupils' education are considered carefully when identifying and responding to their individual needs. Staff welcome the improved accuracy, timeliness and accessibility of the information that they now receive about pupils' needs. All staff receive helpful training about how best to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of these pupils. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that staff use this information consistently well within lessons in order to adapt their teaching and meet pupils' needs.

You and your leadership team are taking decisive steps toward sustained improvement. You have galvanised your leadership team around a shared vision. Senior leaders have developed their understanding of their roles, and now monitor the impact of their work closely. Consequently, they are now better able to react to emerging needs as they arise.

The school has worked hard to engender an effective culture of safeguarding. You have acted swiftly to fill gaps in the attendance processes, and record-keeping, identified at the previous inspection. For example, registers are now completed on time, and leaders have a clear understanding about which pupils are in school, and who is not. Beyond this, leaders have ensured they have a deep understanding of the contextual safeguarding risks to pupils. Leaders are proactive in seeking support and guidance from external agencies to ensure pupils are kept as safe as possible. When concerns are raised, leaders now act swiftly to resolve these. In addition to this, the single central record remains compliant, with all relevant checks in place. Staff have had appropriate safeguarding training and are vigilant to potential signs of harm.

The support from the trust has continued to be well targeted. School leaders and staff have welcomed this support. The trust is committed to continuing to support the school in this way as long as this is needed.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Marches Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Laney
His Majesty's Inspector