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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 16 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 fourth 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, I discussed with you and 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. I 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 one assistant headteacher responsible for sixth-form provision. In addition to this appointment, one of the recently appointed assistant headteachers has taken over responsibility for the development of the school's reading programme. These changes have added further strength to the senior leadership team, which continues to focus its attention on the most important things requiring development. You and the leadership team are continuing to take the right actions, in the right order and at the right pace. Since the previous inspection, you have been successful in appointing staff to most of the posts that were previously vacant, including subject roles in mathematics, English and modern foreign languages. At the time of this inspection, there remains one teaching vacancy in science.

Since the last inspection, leaders have reset the school's expectations regarding pupils' behaviour. You have spelled this out to pupils clearly, and you have ensured that staff have received training to support them in meeting new expectations. As a result of this work, pupils now have a clearer understanding of which behaviours are acceptable and which are not. Increasingly, pupils meet these expectations in lessons and around the school site. You and your team are clear that there is more to be done to ensure that all staff apply these new expectations consistently. At present, when pupils misbehave, some teachers do not always challenge this. When this happens, this disrupts the learning of others, hinders pupils' progress and undermines the culture you are trying to create. You continue to provide targeted support to staff who require help with managing poor behaviour. This is beginning to have a positive impact.

As part of the resetting of behaviour expectations, leaders have adjusted several of their processes for managing poor behaviour. Previously, if a pupil struggled to manage their behaviour, they were removed from a lesson and placed in another class. Often, this caused further disruption to pupils' learning in the class where a pupil was placed. Leaders have listened to the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff to change this. Now, when pupils misbehave, they are sent to the school's 'reset space'. Here, pupils generally work well and access the same curriculum as their peers. However, this is not always the case. The work given to some pupils in the removal room does not always reflect the content of the curriculum well enough. You recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure pupils access work that is well aligned to the curriculum when they are removed from lessons.

Since the last inspection, leaders have continued their precise unpicking of the school's behaviour data. Leaders are building an increasingly clear and accurate picture of why some pupils struggle to meet leaders' behaviour expectations. Leaders are now checking on the impact of the interventions they have in place to support these pupils. This is helping you and your team to reshape the support you provide for these pupils. Overall, this work is beginning to help those pupils who need it.

Despite the work you are doing to shift the culture of behaviour across the school, there remains a negative perception among some parents about the school's work. You and your team have recently begun to consider how to resolve this. Recently, you have started to celebrate the successes and positive behaviours now shown by the majority of pupils. This work is in its early stages and, at present, has had little impact on some parents' perceptions of the school. You have further plans to address this, but these are yet to be enacted.

Since the last inspection, you have worked smartly to tackle the weaknesses in reading. You now have a clear picture of pupils' reading ability and have broadened the support you offer to support these pupils. While the work is still in the early stages, this is already starting to have a positive impact on pupils' reading. You are now monitoring pupils' progress in reading more carefully. You have accurately identified where this support has not been as impactful as you would like and have begun to address this.

Since the previous inspection, and due to the focus on behaviour management, there has been limited emphasis on improvements to teaching. Until now, you have focused your attention on ensuring that teachers know different teaching strategies they can use in lessons. However, activities chosen by teachers do not always support pupils to learn the intended knowledge. There is still work to be done to ensure that the approaches teachers use to deliver the curriculum lead to successful learning. Additionally, there is more to be done to ensure that assessment is used effectively across the school, and that staff meet the needs of pupils consistently well. You are aware of these shortcomings and have appropriate plans in place to address them.

You and the leadership team continue to work collaboratively to further develop an understanding of the team's different roles. Leaders now monitor the impact of their work closely. You have continued to be well supported by leaders from the multi-academy trust. Leaders at all levels are dedicated to ensuring that the school continues to improve swiftly. You are taking decisive steps toward sustained improvement.

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