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Kelly Osborne-James
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Osborne-James

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Deanery CE Academy

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 September 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, Sarah Favager-Dalton, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and I discussed with you, senior leaders in the school, senior leaders from the trust, members of the local academy council and other members of staff 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, spoke with groups of pupils, looked at pupils' work and met with the executive headteacher who will be leading the school from September 2024. 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 school should take further action to:

- ensure that policies and practice reflect the values of the school
- ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous inspection, the trust has appointed you as interim headteacher to lead the school before it joins a new multi-academy trust. A link trustee, with current experience of leading a secondary school, was also appointed last September. The senior leadership team has remained stable this academic year. Since April, the new executive principal has started to work more closely with the school. Staff turnover and absence have remained high. This has been the most significant barrier to school improvement. The school has added capacity to the pastoral team. The focus of this monitoring inspection was to evaluate the progress made towards each of the areas of improvement outlined in the previous inspection report.

Since the previous graded inspection, curriculum planning has improved. The school has also developed a set of pedagogical approaches to help pupils to know and remember more. Staff have received relevant additional training. This is proving successful in a few areas, but not consistently so. Assessment is not yet used effectively, particularly at key stage 3. While progress has been made, staff instability has meant this has not been rapid. The school has taken effective action to ensure that staffing is stable for September, and that agency staff attend relevant training. Some staff still report concerns about the level of support received from the current trust.

Struggling readers are being supported. While more work needs to be done to accurately diagnose specific gaps in reading knowledge, the school has taken appropriate action to support pupils to read well. As with other areas of the school's work, the leadership of reading in the school next year remains uncertain. This needs to be confirmed in order for the work to continue at a pace. The same is true for ensuring that robust oversight of pupil premium funding continues.

The school has put plans in place to address weaknesses in the provision for pupils' personal development, including the delivery of an age-appropriate relationships and sex education curriculum. However, pupils' understanding of this curriculum is still weak, as is their understanding of fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not clearly articulated the school's values to all stakeholders. These do not underpin the school's work. As a result, the action taken has not always been effective. Many pupils' attitudes towards school remain negative and the use of derogatory language regularly remains unchallenged. The provision for careers education information advice and guidance (CEAIG) has improved. From a low starting point, you have focused on ensuring that older pupils are

able to make informed decisions about their post-16 options. More work needs to be done to ensure there is a stable careers programme in place for all pupils, including fulfilling the statutory requirement of the provider access legislation. The oversight of CEAIG and other aspects of the personal development curriculum is an important consideration for the new trust.

The school has been more successful in improving attendance. While more work needs to be done to reduce persistent absence, more pupils now attend school most of the time, and fewer pupils are severely absent. There are also robust systems in place to track and monitor pupils' behaviour, including enhanced pastoral support. While most pupils agree that behaviour has improved since the previous inspection, the inconsistent application of the behaviour policy remains a source of frustration for many. More work needs to be done to ensure that consequences are appropriate, and that pupils do not miss out on their learning unnecessarily. You have also successfully established clear systems and processes to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. While much of this work is in its early stages, significant improvements have been made.

The school has received additional support from the new multi-academy trust, including reviewing and advising on inclusion and curriculum. The new trust has also provided assurances to staff that IT infrastructure and resources will improve, so they are better able to provide a good quality of education to all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Victoria Griffin
His Majesty's Inspector