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Mary Lynch
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lynch

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 30 April and 1 May 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November and December 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, Louise Minter, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you and the head of school, other senior leaders and members of the governing body 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, reviewed examples of pupils' work and spoke to staff and pupils. In addition, I reviewed a range of documents relating to school improvement and safeguarding procedures. 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 my last visit, there have been significant changes to the leadership structure of the school. Following your appointment in October 2023, you have added additional leadership capacity through the appointment of an acting head of school. The school has also strengthened the pastoral team by appointing a family support worker. You are looking to further develop leadership through the appointment of an assistant headteacher.

Although there has been a period of instability, staff are proud to work at the school. Staff share your vision for improvement and are excited about the journey ahead. They recognise that leaders take their workload and well-being into account when introducing new initiatives.

Since January, additional leadership capacity has ensured that progress has accelerated. At the previous monitoring visit, I identified that due to instability of staffing, behaviour had deteriorated. You and your leaders have quickly acted to address this. You have implemented a new behaviour policy alongside training for all staff. You have ensured that during playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils have structured activities and games where they are taught how to work and play together. In lessons, most staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, behaviour has improved considerably. You are aware that there are still some pockets of inconsistency but have identified these and are putting effective support in place to ensure that all staff share your high expectations.

In addition, you recognised that pupils' absence was having a detrimental impact on their behaviour and learning. The school has tackled this with vigour. You ensure that pupils and their families understand the importance of regular attendance. For those who need more intensive support, you have systems in place to work closely with families to remove barriers to low attendance. This is beginning to have a positive impact as the number of pupils who are in school and arrive on time is increasing.

The improvements you have made in the teaching of phonics are clear. All staff are well trained in the school's chosen approach. There is regular coaching and monitoring in place to ensure that all staff are confident and have strong subject knowledge. Staff follow the scheme with fidelity and, as a result, pupils are becoming more confident readers. You have begun to think about the books you want pupils to know in depth and how these will further enhance the wider curriculum. However, you recognise there is still more work to do to support the wider teaching of reading.

After starting in your role, you quickly identified that significant improvements were needed in the early years. You have made significant improvements to the learning environment and have developed an ambitious curriculum. You are now working to ensure that these ambitions and practices are consistent across the early years.

The wider curriculum is developing, but significant improvements are still needed. All pupils now study a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils have more opportunities to

experience learning beyond the curriculum for example through trips, World Book Day and competitive sports. However, learning in the majority of subjects has not yet been sequenced to ensure pupils build a depth of knowledge over time.

Since the last monitoring visit, governors have taken decisive action in regard to the school's future. They are working closely with St John Paul II Multi-Academy Company to ensure they have the right support to help the school progress quickly. Governors are working closely with the local authority, the diocese and the multi-academy company to secure future stability. This is allowing you and other leaders to continue to focus on school improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of Birmingham, 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

Eve Morris
His Majesty's Inspector