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Mrs Gemma Earles
Principal
Bradford Forster Academy
Fenby Avenue
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Dear Mrs Earles,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bradford Forster Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 17 and 18 December 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 March 2023.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key judgements 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, Pritiben Patel, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the director of secondary education of the trust, other staff, trustees and governors 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, carried out work scrutinies, held meetings with staff and pupils and considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and parents, including Ofsted Parent View. 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 no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

HMCI is of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

During this inspection, the inspection team focused on the quality of education that the school provides, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, the school's provision for pupils' personal development, and leadership and management.

Since the last inspection, the school has made significant strides in several areas, particularly developing pupils' reading skills across the curriculum. The school's relentless focus on continual improvement has been maintained, with notable success in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities through well-tailored interventions and classroom support. Staff and pupils have risen to the challenge that you and your leaders set. They are committed to working together to improve the school. The changes introduced to the curriculum and the wider school offer have had a positive impact. However, you are undertaking work to continue to address gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils. The most recent external examinations show improvement in key areas, and you explained how you use your internal assessments to assure yourself that progress in pupils' learning continues. There remains some variation in the consistency of teaching practice. However, staffing in school is much more settled. This has helped reduce staff absence and supported you in ensuring that subject specialists are able to deliver the school's curriculum.

Staff support the trust and the school's values. Their confidence in leaders and the changes that have been made are improving all aspects of school life. Your careful strategic changes have been woven into the development of the school. The school's values are embedded. Staff and pupils know and exhibit these values in their approach to their work. You have ensured that priorities identified in the previous inspection are being addressed, while assuring yourself that no other areas are neglected. This is a careful balancing act, which you have demonstrated is possible with the support of your leadership team and the cooperation of the staff. The school's momentum for positive change is being maintained and refined. Pupils and staff are benefiting from the changes.

Clear communication lines are well established with the staff, trustees, governors, pupils and families. These help to ensure that decisions taken are shared promptly and appropriately. The steps taken since the last monitoring visit have supported secure progress over time. For example, the impact of the effort to improve attendance has been impressive. In the school, there is a sense of pride among pupils and staff that was not evident in the past. The pupils and staff are proud of their school. They feel and are pleased to say they are valued members of the school community. As headteacher, your enthusiasm and determination to give the community's pupils the best start in life is well matched by that of the staff and fellow leaders. Together, you exemplify the school's clear direction and strong purpose.

The school's offer has been strengthened to further support professional development. Staff participate in high-quality internal and external training and coaching, including completing nationally recognised qualifications. Professional development is available to all staff at all levels. This has given staff the knowledge to be able to use a range of ways of checking pupils' learning and understanding and addressing errors. However, this

approach is not used consistently across the school, leading to variability in the feedback that pupils receive.

Pupils' positive behaviours in school continue to improve. Staff support the pupils in managing their behaviour, particularly in less structured activities and transition times, such as break and lunch. The pupils and staff work together, which makes the school a calm and purposeful environment. Leaders track and monitor behaviours. Using this information, they provide bespoke support for pupils in need of this. The school has successfully reduced the number of pupils suspended from school. This means pupils spend more time in school and class than before.

The school continues to welcome parents, carers and local community members; thus, breaking down barriers between the school and the community. As headteacher, you actively encourage the wider community into the school and support the work of the school out within the local community. Concerts, sporting events and charity work are examples of how the school, under your leadership, works with the community to enrich lives.

Extracurricular activities are a great example of the positive change that has occurred. A well-managed, planned and carefully tracked offer broadens minds and provides opportunities to create lasting memories for the pupils. From clubs in school where pupils read and crochet together to international trips, pupils can build on their talents and discover new areas of interest that they had not experienced prior to joining the school.

The school draws on external audits to inform actions and triangulate internal progress markers. This provides valuable information for staff, governors and the trust. The data is used effectively to inform the next steps and focus areas to support school development. Trustees and the local governing body work together seamlessly as a cohesive unit. Their deep understanding of their distinct roles and responsibilities has matured, enabling them to execute their duties with focused professionalism and diligence. Communication channels are highly refined and operate with remarkable efficiency. The integration between trust leaders and school staff has strengthened into a unified team. All leaders and school staff demonstrate an unwavering shared vision. They have proven their sustained capacity to drive continuous school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Jones
His Majesty's Inspector