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22 June 2021

Ruth McNeil  
Headteacher  
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Derbyshire  
DE24 0AN

Dear Mrs McNeil

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Landau Forte Academy Moorhead**

Following my visit with Peter Stonier, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 and 20 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

**The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.**

**The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.**

**Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.**

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Landau Forte multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19 and 20 May 2021**

### **Context**

COVID-19 has had an impact on the speed of improvement at the school. The periods of lockdown meant that some pupils did not participate regularly with learning. Leaders have struggled to appoint some staff, while others have left. The school community experienced bereavement.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher both joined after the last inspection. The headteacher was made permanent in the role in January 2021. There have been several changes to the teaching staff. Most teachers have joined since the last inspection.

### **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

On her appointment, the headteacher decided on the areas which needed to improve. Leaders rightly began by tackling weaknesses in reading, mathematics, the early years and behaviour. These improvements have provided a secure foundation for future development.

Staff understand the need for urgent improvement. The headteacher said staff are 'on the bus' and are striving to make things better for pupils. Staff say leaders support them well. They have had training to help them in their roles. This has included training for safeguarding, behaviour management, reading and mathematics. Leaders have included staff in decisions about what the curriculum will look like. Staff said that leaders are very considerate of their well-being and workload.

Governance has strengthened. Several new governors have joined the governing body. They are providing much-needed expertise. Governors are now more rigorous in checking that leaders' actions are making a difference to pupils' education. They know that there is still much to be done. They are now better placed to challenge and support leaders.

Leaders have revised the school's behaviour management procedures. These are now simpler and easier for staff, pupils, parents and carers to understand. Leaders have made sure staff know what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Staff are now more consistent in tackling low-level disruption. The number of incidents of disruption in lessons is reducing.

Leaders have introduced new curriculums for reading and mathematics. These are well sequenced and build on what pupils have learned before. The staff leading these subjects know the curriculum well. They are checking to make sure staff are following the programmes. These leaders are providing support and training. This is

helping to make sure teaching in reading and mathematics is becoming more consistent.

In reading, some pupils are still not where they need to be. This is due in part to gaps in learning which developed during the periods of lockdown. Teachers are checking to make sure pupils are learning the right sounds. There are lots of opportunities to learn and recap phonics during the day. This is helping pupils to catch up. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they know. When reading, pupils use their knowledge of phonics to help them to read unfamiliar words. For example, a child in the early years used his phonics knowledge to sound out the names of countries on a globe.

In mathematics, the school's new curriculum builds knowledge as pupils move through the school. Pupils use resources to help them visualise mathematical concepts. For example, in Year 4, pupils were using counters to represent place value when dividing large numbers. Some pupils struggle with new learning as they have gaps in their knowledge. There is still some weaker teaching where staff are less confident in the school's curriculum. The ambition for what some pupils should be able to do is sometimes not high enough.

Leaders are tackling the weaknesses in the early years. Staff have a better understanding of the early years curriculum and what they are required to teach. They are using their knowledge of what children can do to move them on with their learning. Effective questioning and discussion are helping to develop children's communication and language. Staff have high ambitions for what children should be able to do. Children are happy and keen learners. They are very willing to talk about what they are learning. For example, a group of children explained the life cycle of a butterfly. They used vocabulary such as 'cocoon' and 'chrysalis' with confidence.

Beyond English and mathematics, the school's curriculum is still at an early stage of development and is not effective in building pupils' knowledge. In subjects such as science and history, it is not clear how pupils' subject knowledge will build over time. In other subjects, such as personal, social, health and economic education, some staff are not following the school's plans. Pupils are not confident in talking about some British values, such as democracy, equality and tolerance. Leaders are yet to check that the school's curriculum for relationships, sex and health education meets statutory requirements.

Leaders know what they want their new curriculum to look like. It is their ambition for pupils to be well prepared for secondary school. This includes raising their aspirations and learning about different career choices and the wider world. Currently, leaders are providing wider opportunities for pupils, such as the recent science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) day. However, while these events are ambitious for pupils, they do not always match or support the school's curriculum.

Leaders have struggled to appoint a leader for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has hampered the speed in which they have been able to make improvements in this area. Leaders have reviewed the school's register of pupils with SEND. They have made sure the pupils with the greatest need are now getting the support they need. This has included seeking external support and funding. However, teachers still need professional development to help them support all pupils with SEND. The new inclusion lead is due to take up the post in September 2021.

Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover in teaching staff. Currently, over half the teaching staff are either newly qualified or temporary. Newly qualified staff have mentors to help and support them. The pandemic has affected the continuity of professional development for these staff. Nonetheless, they are very complimentary about the support they have received.

The school's plans for development include the key areas to tackle weaknesses. However, due to the pandemic, and turbulence in staffing, some of the actions are not as well developed as leaders would have liked. They are refining school improvement planning to further develop the school's curriculum.

### **Additional support**

The trust has taken a long time to get to grips with tackling weaknesses in the quality of education provided at Landau Forte Academy Moorhead. The trust failed to bring about significant improvements following the inadequate judgement at our section 5 inspection in 2016. As a result, there was a second inadequate Ofsted judgement of the school in March 2019. It is only recently that the trust has begun to implement a new strategy to tackle the school's weaknesses. This has included the recent appointment of the new leadership team. These new leaders are providing much-needed vision, drive and ambition.

The trust has provided mentors for leaders. These mentors are experienced senior leaders from other schools in the trust. This provision has included specialist SEND advice and support while the school has been without an inclusion manager. This support has helped leaders to make sure the school's register of pupils with SEND is now accurate. Mentors have supported leaders in seeking additional funding and support for pupils with the highest needs.

The chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer meet the new leadership team regularly to discuss the priorities for improvement. They have made sure the school has the resources it needs to improve. For example, they have funded increased staffing in the early years.

The trust has very recently strengthened the expertise of the trust board and the school's governing body. New members are bringing much-needed experience, providing stronger advice, challenge and support.

## **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, deputy chief executive officer, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance.