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03 November 2025

Mrs Jane Wood
Headteacher
Masham CofE VA Primary School
Masham
Market Place
1 Millgate
Ripon
North Yorkshire
HG4 4EG

Dear Mrs Wood,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Masham CofE VA Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 16 and 17 September 2025, 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 January 2024.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision 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, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, staff, the interim executive board, the diocese and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I also visited lessons, held meetings with other staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. 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.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous monitoring visit, there have been changes to the leadership structure of the school. This has created a sustainable model for the school. A new headteacher has recently been appointed and there have also been changes to the teaching and support staff teams. Recent collaboration with other local schools and continued professional development of staff have added strength and capacity to the school.

There is momentum in the school's improvement actions and a shared determination among all stakeholders to ensure that the school provides a high-quality education for pupils. The right actions are being taken and there is clear impact of this. The school has strong foundations to continue its improvement journey. However, there is more to do to ensure that pupils learn and remember the knowledge that they need to be ready for their next steps.

The curriculum has been improved since the previous monitoring visit. The school has now identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of the mixed-aged classes and address pupils' historical gaps in knowledge. The school has carefully considered curriculum changes that will have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. In some subjects, some of these developments are very recent and have not had time to embed to have the desired impact on pupils' learning.

The curriculum intent has progressed well, but the implementation remains inconsistent. Too often, pupils' misconceptions are not addressed swiftly. This limits pupils' ability to learn and remember the knowledge set out in the curriculum. The school has made progress in maintaining a focus on ensuring that teachers check whether pupils have learned and remembered what they have been taught. However, further work is required to embed this practice consistently across all classes.

Children make a positive start in the early years. They quickly settle into the routines and expectations of the school day and learn how to play and work together well. The school ensures that they receive high-quality phonics teaching right from the start of Reception. Reading continues to be a high priority across school. More staff are now trained to deliver phonics, which is having a positive impact on early reading and pupils learning to read fluently and accurately. The school has provided more opportunities for older pupils to develop their reading fluency and skills. It has invested in better quality reading materials and is providing additional support for pupils where needed.

The school has hugely improved the quality of the support plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the school needs to ensure that interventions and in-class support for pupils with SEND are well matched to their needs.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. The interim executive board, diocese and local authority have developed a working relationship that is sharply focused on the improvement priorities of the school. The new leadership structure has begun to strengthen some curriculum practices. Going forward, the school should continue to ensure that curriculum changes are having the intended impact on pupils' achievement, including those with disadvantage. There is now greater consideration of staff's workload and well-being, which is having a positive impact on staff's morale. Parents are increasingly positive about the school, although some parents feel that communication between home and school could be improved. The school receives ongoing support from the multi-academy trust it will soon be joining. The trust is working closely with the school, parents and the community. This is providing continuity.

The safeguarding arrangements in school are effective. Pupils feel welcomed and safe in school. Across the curriculum, pupils display a positive attitude to their learning.

The school values the input of and collaboration with external partners. This has improved staff's expertise and opportunities to further strengthen the school's personal development offer.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Chinaka
His Majesty's Inspector