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Cheryl Brindle
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Dear Mrs Brindle

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Eldon Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 30 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in March and April 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 and Pippa Jackson-Maitland, SHMI, discussed with you, the interim deputy headteacher, other interim senior leaders, staff, members of the interim executive board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority, 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 some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and met with staff, pupils and parents and carers. 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 having serious weaknesses.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Following the graded inspection in March and April 2024, the local authority disbanded the local governing body. An IEB was established in October 2024. An interim deputy headteacher and interim executive principal took up their posts in September and November 2024. Other interim senior leaders were appointed to the school. The substantive headteacher was absent from the school at the time of this inspection and for the majority of the last academic year. A new interim headteacher took up post in September 2025. The previous interim executive principal is providing support as a consultant. There has been turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection. Currently, some classes are taught by temporary teachers. The school is in the process of joining a multi-academy trust.

The school has prioritised the right actions, in the right order, to address the considerable weaknesses, in relation to leadership and management, that were identified at the previous inspection. The IEB has the knowledge and expertise to provide effective support and challenge to the school. It has driven school improvement and has taken swift action to strengthen the leadership of the school. The appointment of experienced interim leaders has brought about much needed capacity at a senior leadership level. However, there remains uncertainty around the future of the school's leadership. Additionally, the school has spent considerable time addressing and investigating ongoing allegations and complaints from staff and parents. These issues have overshadowed the school's ability to make all the necessary changes that are required to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Over the last year, the school has successfully rebuilt its previously fractured relationship with the local authority. The rekindling of this partnership has helped the school to draw on appropriate external support for leadership and management. This has brought some stability to the school and has enabled it to begin to resolve some staff's concerns. However, a small number of staff remain unhappy with the uncertainty in the school's leadership, changes in staff and the impact that this has on pupils' learning and well-being.

Staff's workload and well-being have been prioritised by the IEB and interim senior leaders. Nonetheless, turbulence at the school has impacted on staff's well-being over time. However, in the last academic year, the school has successfully reduced staff absence. Under interim leadership arrangements, most staff feel that their views are listened to and they feel valued and respected. Staff morale is improving. They appreciate the support for their professional development afforded to them by the IEB and interim leaders.

Interim leaders have successfully improved communication with parents over the last academic year. This has rebuilt trust by keeping parents well informed about what is happening at the school. Parents appreciate the changes that the school has made to improve their children's day-to-day experiences. Although some parents remain dissatisfied with the speed of response to their concerns, interim leaders are continuing to work on this aspect.

The pressing issue in this school has been to stabilise leadership and staffing. As such, pupils' learning experiences remain variable. The delivery of the curriculum continues to be inconsistent. The development of subject leadership is at an early stage. The school's oversight of the quality of education that pupils receive, although improving, remains fragile. While pupils' learning under interim leadership is undoubtedly more secure, deeply entrenched issues have resulted in gaps in pupils' knowledge and deep-rooted misconceptions being identified. This has adversely impacted on pupils' learning and their achievement.

Appropriate use has been made of external support. The school has drawn on the advice and guidance of the multi-academy trust that it intends to join. The trust continues to provide support to develop the school's curriculum and its implementation. Along with the local authority, the trust has supported staff's ongoing training. For example, staff have engaged with external input into developing teaching and learning strategies, improving subject leadership and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additionally, the school has engaged well with the trust to review its curriculum. This is helping to ensure that staff are clear about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and the order it should be taught in.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Timmons
Senior His Majesty's Inspector