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16 February 2015

Mr Brian Kelly  
Headteacher  
Royds School  
Pennington Lane  
Oulton  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS26 8EX

Dear Mr Kelly

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Royds School**

Following my visit to your school on 13 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A group of students accompanied me on a tour of the school. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

The heads of the information and communication technology and technology departments both left last term, along with a teacher in art, modern foreign languages and technology. There have been new appointments including an assistant headteacher for teaching and learning, a head of biology, two English teachers and a mathematics teacher. There was a managed staff redundancy that took effect in December that resulted in eight full time equivalent staff being made redundant.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

School leaders recognise the amount of work needed to tackle the areas for improvement and have started to act with urgency. Senior leaders have shown a determination to address behaviour and safety issues. Assemblies and revised reporting systems including a "Tell Us" web link are currently being introduced to help students feel confident that when they report bullying or other concerns, these will be tackled quickly and successfully.

Senior leaders are supporting middle leaders to improve their impact and tackle weaknesses in teaching. Middle leaders were keen to report that the support and guidance from senior leaders is helping them develop their ability to check on and improve teaching. Senior leaders have introduced a clear schedule for when middle leaders are expected to check that teaching is improving. Middle leaders I spoke with value this approach and are clearer about their role in tackling the areas for improvement.

Governors are now linked to specific school priorities following the inspection. They are keen to see improvement quickly and have started to visit the school to check that progress is being made. However, weaknesses in the school's action plan detract from its effectiveness as a tool to support governors in monitoring the progress and impact of actions over time. There are no clear timescales for when actions need to have been taken by and so this makes it difficult to know what should have happened and by when. There is not a sharp enough focus on what the intended impact these actions will have on students' achievement and so this makes it difficult to know how and when to challenge the school. Similar points were also raised about the quality of school plans in the recent external review of pupil premium funding.

The local authority statement of action suffers from similar weaknesses. It is not precise enough in what it expects in relation to the impact of local authority action in the school. This is especially the case when it is commissioning other schools to provide support.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is not fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**