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5 March 2015

Mr A Butt  
Lyndon School  
Daylesford Road  
Solihull  
B92 8EJ

Dear Mr Butt

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Lyndon School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 March 2015, 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 which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in December 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2013**

- Improve teaching, achievement and students' attitudes to learning by making sure that:
  - all teachers use achievement data to match lesson activities effectively to the different skills and abilities of all students, particularly those of middle ability
  - marking and feedback are frequent and provide students with precise advice on how to improve their work, and students are encouraged to respond to teachers' comments
  - teachers check the progress individual students make in lessons, so they can modify the work if some students are finding it too easy or too hard
  - students are given every opportunity to write at length in all subjects when it is appropriate
  - students with hearing impairments are given work that is suitable for their needs whenever they are taught in mainstream classes.
  
- Raise achievement in science in Key Stage 4 by making sure that:
  - students study courses which are accurately matched to their individual levels of attainment
  - leaders improve the teaching of science to enable more students to reach the highest grades by the end of Year 11.
  
- Improve the impact that leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, have on students' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - all subject leaders have the knowledge and skills to improve teaching and achievement
  - the targets set for students and teachers in all subjects are challenging, particularly in Key Stage 4
  - the best teaching is shared systematically and effectively across the school.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 3 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders and managers, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive of the academy trust planning to sponsor the school, and a representative of the local authority. At this visit, the inspector reviewed actions taken to resolve previous concerns over leadership, the school's estimate of current students' performance, the behaviour of students and the work done by the school to keep them safe. The inspector observed break and lunchtime arrangements, and reviewed the impact of safeguarding policies. The inspector visited six lessons for short observations of teaching and to sample students' work.

### **Context**

In January 2015, the governing body decided to seek sponsorship for becoming an academy. The necessary order has been granted, with a planned conversion date of 1 September 2015. The sponsoring academy trust has conducted a review of the school's leadership capacity and has now appointed the current headteacher to the role of principal effective from the 1st of September 2015. There are plans to further strengthen the leadership team. Since the previous monitoring inspection, five teaching staff, including the previous headteacher, have left the school, with three teachers joining the school.

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

The school is back on track for the removal of serious weaknesses, following the setback over last summer and early autumn relating to previous senior leadership effectiveness. The current headteacher has accelerated improvements in teaching quality through the consistent application of performance management and occupational health policies. He has been fully supported by effective local authority advice in managing the formal processes required. The headteacher is leaving no stone unturned in addressing longstanding weaknesses across the school, including a determination to engage all staff and students in raising the standards of behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. An experienced senior school leader has been assigned full time to lead science. She is modelling how to teach students to work scientifically, thereby improving students' interest and motivation in learning science.

School assessment information suggests that current Year 11 students are on track to achieve broadly average standards at GCSE this year in most subjects, including in science. This would be much improved from GCSE results in 2014, where students underachieved in many subjects with the exception of modern foreign languages, in which they achieved well.

Although behaviour was not identified as a specific area for improvement in the previous inspection, it is not yet good. Students expressed some frustration with the behaviour of a few students at break times, citing examples of unkind language, litter not being picked up and, occasionally, boisterous physical interactions; examples of all of these were seen at this inspection. Students had fewer concerns over behaviour in lessons, and could clearly connect the few instances of disruptive behaviour with lessons that did not engage or interest students effectively enough.

The school's safeguarding and child protection policies are operating effectively.

The recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body together with the head teacher are expertly managing the process of becoming an academy. They articulate a clear sense of strategic direction for the future. This includes the retention of the useful partnership arrangements the school currently has through its own trust board, for example, with local further and higher education partners, and major businesses.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The headteacher's depth of knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, his understanding of how to fix the problems and the urgency that he is bringing to the whole leadership team to take the necessary action
- The effective strategic leadership of governors and the local authority in securing long-term improvement and sustainability of provision
- The work of pastoral managers to improve attendance and support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The remaining inconsistencies in how well some teachers take account of students' abilities and prior learning to ensure students are challenged and motivated by the tasks they are set
- The variable quality of feedback students receive in some subjects on how to improve their learning.

### **External support**

The local authority's support has been an essential component in bringing about the changes of leadership required to improve teaching. The authority has supported the link between Lyndon School and the sponsoring academy trust, leading to the proposal for Lyndon to become one of the partner academies within the proposed trust. The work by external consultants to correct historically inaccurate teacher assessment data brings confidence to the current estimates of students' achievement. Local authority consultants are helping to provide regular evaluative reviews of school performance, which are then used to direct effective training and development for teachers and governors.