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5 June 2015

Mrs Saira Luffman  
Principal  
Swallow Hill Community College  
Whingate Road  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS12 3DS

Dear Mrs Luffman

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Swallow Hill Community College**

Following my visit to your academy on 4 June 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 February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, vice-Principal for standards and achievement, three members of the governing body, a group of subject leaders and a representative from the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). I also met with a group of 12 students from Years 7 to 12, spoke with leaders for teaching and learning and had a phone conversation with the Academy Improvement Adviser. The academy's action plan and the trust's statement of action were reviewed along with the single central register and various other documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records of teaching and anonymised performance management targets.

### **Context**

A teacher of information and communication technology has left since the inspection and three science teachers have been appointed, one of whom is the second in charge in the science department.

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

The Principal has been instrumental in developing a 'team spirit' in which teachers with whom I spoke were in no doubt what the key issues are and how current and planned actions are aimed at tackling these. There is now a sharper focus on improving students' achievement and greater staff accountability. Consequently, staff morale remains positive as weaker performance is being tackled.

Governors are capable, confident and knowledgeable. They have a good grasp of key priorities in relation to improving teaching and leadership. They challenge appropriately and receive a wide range of information from the Principal and others which keeps them well informed.

External reviews of governance and the use of pupil premium funding (additional government money) have taken place. As a result of this, subject leaders are starting to pay greater attention to the achievement of disadvantaged students and checking whether they are making enough progress. Governors are keen to act upon the recommendations from their external review and are starting work to develop closer links with the local community.

The academy action plan is detailed and carefully plots the proposed improvements that are expected to take place. Along with clear timescales and measurable targets this enables governors to ask targeted questions to check the progress being made. The academy plan would be an even more useful tool for improvement if there were more precise details about longer term planned actions to sustain the 'green shoots' of improvement and help avoid too many actions starting at the same time.

AET has provided a wide range of valued support. This has included the appointment of a new subject leader for mathematics and helpful support in checking the accuracy of English assessments. The support for science is at a less developed stage and signs of significant impact are not yet evident. The sponsor's statement of action, however, is not fit for purpose. It is not clear when various actions listed are to take place or what the intended impact will be. Nor is the plan clear enough about the roles different external advisers will play in monitoring the work of the academy.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The academy's action plan is fit for purpose.

The sponsor'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**