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Elizabeth Furber and Elaine Boyd  
Joint Principals  
All Saints Academy  
Houghton Road  
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Bedfordshire  
LU5 5AB

Dear Mrs Furber and Ms Boyd

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of All Saints Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 15 December 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 academy's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in July 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, in addition to a number of meetings held with you both, I held meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders, and a range of pupils from Years 7–13. A telephone discussion was also held with the local authority's Assistant Director for School Improvement. I evaluated the governing body's statement of action, the academy's action plan, and other associated documents.

I visited a number of lessons and activities pupils were engaged in as part of the special enrichment day taking place during my visit. I also observed behaviour and conduct at break and lunchtime, holding informal discussions with a range of pupils and staff. I reviewed the single central record of staff working in the academy, as well as risk assessments in place for the additional activities taking place during my visit.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in July, the former Principal, Vice-Principal, Chair of the Governing Body and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have all left the academy. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors were elected in October, and you both joined the academy in your acting roles as joint Principals on 1 November.

Under the previous leadership, an initial statement of action was submitted to Ofsted in October. Following your appointments, a revised statement of action and academy improvement plan has been prepared.

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

Your arrival at the academy followed a difficult period of substantial change and very disappointing summer examination results both at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In a short period of time you have acted robustly to bring stability and strong leadership to the academy. You have developed an academy improvement plan that reflects your previous experience and knowledge of the actions required to generate rapid improvements. The actions already taken, and others that are planned, are appropriate and respond energetically to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. As you review the initial impact of the actions taken, you will need to set out clearer milestones against which to monitor and evaluate the progress being made to ensure that improvements are made evenly across the academy and remain rapid enough.

Both you and the new Chair of the Governing Body have acted swiftly and taken difficult decisions to improve the quality of provision for the pupils. Along with other leaders, you have acted to raise the expectations of what can be achieved by setting more ambitious targets for pupils and for staff. More regular assessment points and closer, more accurate analysis of pupils' performance is already helping teachers plan more effectively and informing an increased range of support and intervention activities such as the Friday afternoon sessions all Year 11 pupils now attend. You have acted to improve the monitoring and support provided to teachers, insisting upon improved marking and feedback, and checking the quality of teaching more systematically. Inadequate teaching no longer goes unchallenged and there are fewer lessons being taught by temporary staff.

Pupils and staff agree that the decision to ban mobile phones and headphones around the academy had a positive impact on pupils' focus and behaviour in lessons. You have built upon this to introduce a new behaviour and rewards system that is well understood and appreciated by pupils, and that is being more consistently applied by staff. Similarly, you have introduced the '6M' non-negotiable features of lessons that clearly set out the high standards and expectations of both pupils and teachers. The early indications are that these measures are having a marked impact upon the behaviour and progress made by pupils because they have been clearly

communicated and you are monitoring their implementation with rigorous systems. Pupils remain very safe in the academy because both leaders and governors implement and monitor the effective policies and procedures robustly. The attendance of pupils has improved so far this academic year, but it is important that the attendance of groups of pupils for whom attendance has been too low is more closely monitored and improves.

Your action plan outlines a number of appropriate actions associated with improving the sixth form, but there is currently less evidence for the impact of these actions. Some changes have been made to the ways learners' progress is tracked, and to the information they receive relating to their targets and how to improve, but a sharper focus is required to ensure that sixth form teaching and outcomes improve at the same rate as the rest of the academy.

The governing body has undergone significant change since the previous inspection and is now well placed to support and challenge leaders effectively over the coming months. The chair and vice-chair are a regular presence in the academy and participate in a range of monitoring activities, such as visiting lessons and reviewing books and folders alongside middle leaders. Governors monitor the academy action plan closely and challenge you strongly when they feel that progress is not sufficient or the impact of actions unclear. As the academic year progresses, governors will need to sharpen their focus on holding you to account for the outcomes of all groups of pupils, and for pupils' progress across years and in different subject areas. It is also important that a long-term strategic plan for the academy's future beyond the next full inspection is developed with sponsors and leaders.

You have drawn upon a range of external support to help inform your actions and improve the training and expertise available to staff. In addition to the experience of school improvement you both bring, you have developed a good relationship with the Chiltern Learning Trust, enabling senior and middle leaders to draw upon the experience of colleagues in nearby successful academies. As co-sponsors, senior staff from the University of Bedfordshire have visited the academy to help you and other senior and middle leaders evaluate the impact of your actions. You have also engaged external consultants to advise and support leaders where required, while retaining useful links with the local authority and their school improvement services. Both you and the governors understand the importance of drawing upon a range of professional networks and partners, and are exploring ways of deepening these relationships.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.**

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The governing body's statement of action is 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 Central Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Spencer  
**Associate Inspector**