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23 March 2017

Graham Steele  
Interim Principal  
David Young Community Academy  
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Leeds  
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LS14 6NU

Dear Mr Steele

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of David Young Community Academy**

Following my visit with Phil Riozzi, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 23 February 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted unannounced under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with the interim principal, groups of pupils and representatives of the school's new trust. Inspectors also met with members of the advisory board, including one member who also represented the local authority and who had been a member of the previous governing body. One inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the diocese and the chair of the advisory board. Inspectors met with two groups of teachers and with individual members of staff. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a series of short lesson visits and observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during break and lunchtime. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally. One inspector visited the school's alternative provision, the Limewood Centre. Inspectors looked at the school's information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, including incidents of exclusion, as well as records of staff attendance. Inspectors looked at a range of other school documents, including a

local authority safeguarding audit.

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

The school is not making progress in improving the effectiveness of the leadership and management of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

Safeguarding is not effective.

### **Context**

David Young Community Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. There are currently 855 pupils on the school's roll. It is currently one of three academies in the LEAF (Love, Enterprise, Aspiration and Faith) Academy Trust. The David Young Community Academy is in the process of becoming part of the Abbey Multi-Academy Trust; this is due to be completed in May 2017.

The substantive principal and the vice-principal left the school in December 2016. An interim principal has been in post since January 2017.

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

The school was inspected in October 2015 and was judged to require special measures. The school's arrangements for safeguarding were judged to be ineffective.

Two monitoring inspections took place, one in April 2016 and one in September 2016. The initial visit judged the trust's statement of action as fit for purpose and the second visit judged that leaders and managers were taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Since the monitoring inspection in September 2016, Ofsted has received concerns about the leadership and management of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. This inspection focused on the wider issues arising from these concerns.

### **Inspection findings**

The departure of the principal and other key staff has had a significant impact on staff morale. The high staff turnover, uncertainties at leadership level and the rebrokering of the school to a new trust have exposed significant and deeply rooted weaknesses in the school's fundamental approach to managing pupils' behaviour

and promoting their personal development. The interim principal, supported by the school's new trust, is beginning to audit the full extent of these issues and tackle them but it is too early to see any significant improvements. Leaders are developing ways of analysing information relating to sanctions and incidents of poor behaviour. This approach is at an early stage but it is beginning to help leaders spot emerging patterns and trends. A new advisory board has replaced the interim governing body but it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness.

Improvements noted at the monitoring visit in September 2016 have not been sustained. Pupils' behaviour in corridors as they line up for assembly is generally orderly but some younger pupils say that a few of the older boys barge into them in the corridor as they move from class to class. A significant number of lessons are disrupted by pupils' low-level disruption and sometimes more serious misbehaviour. Typically, pupils chat and take any opportunity to avoid working. Their attitudes to learning are generally poor and they are heavily reliant on teachers to persuade and cajole them into completing their work. Inspectors saw pupils throwing pencils and arguing with teachers about the rules. Other pupils confirm that this is not uncommon. There are pockets of good practice where pupils are keen to engage and they enjoy their learning but this is far from typical.

Behaviour is boisterous outside at break and lunchtimes. Staff on duty tend to stand and watch pupils rather than spot potential problems and take action. A significant number of pupils are not respectful to adults or to each other.

Plans to move the Limewood Centre into the main school building are sensible and allow for established centre staff to lay the groundwork. However, teachers and other staff remain unconvinced and view the move with trepidation.

Over time, leaders have failed to provide effective support for teachers to help them develop robust approaches to managing pupils' behaviour. Teachers are generally over-reliant on leaders to remove pupils who are not following the rules. For example, in a typical week this term, pupils were removed from class on over 200 occasions. This unacceptable situation is further compounded because teachers are not routinely required to follow up poor behaviour directly with pupils to allow for a fresh start the following lesson. A significant number of teachers ask for pupils to be removed too readily while others do not use this option when they should.

The high number of pupils removed from lessons has resulted in a high number of pupils in detention or isolation. This system is unwieldy and many pupils vote with their feet and do not attend, in turn leading to a high exclusion rate that is not improving pupils' attitude to learning. Leaders and staff who are on 'duty callout' are overstretched and cannot attend all of the teachers' requests for assistance. As a result, teachers are not applying the behaviour rules consistently and, consequently, behaviour of pupils is unacceptable. Thus, a vicious circle has been created.

The school launched a new approach to behaviour on the day of the inspection but

it is clearly too soon to evaluate its effectiveness.

Leaders, including governors, have failed to create a culture of mutual trust and respect. Relationships between staff and leaders are mistrustful. A significant number of staff, including support staff and senior leaders, preferred to talk to inspectors alone rather than with other staff. Views are divided about the quality of support from leaders and staff morale is low. A significant number of staff say behaviour has deteriorated since the arrival of the new interim principal but inspection evidence demonstrates that current difficulties are deeply embedded and a fundamental part of the school's culture.

Very serious incidents of poor behaviour are not common but do happen, such as a chair or a bin being thrown by pupils. Senior staff deal with such incidents appropriately and swiftly. Nevertheless, staff and pupils are unnerved and rumours and conjecture are adding to the lack of trust and poor relationships.

The school is rapidly losing teaching staff. Seven members of staff left at the end of December 2016, including the principal, a vice-principal and a lead assistant principal. A further five staff are due to leave at the end of this term and 17 have attended or will attend external interviews for new posts this term. The school's new trust has been proactive in meeting with staff who are thinking of leaving. However, this is a recent action and it is too soon to evaluate if this will stem the tide, leaving the school increasingly fragile. Staff absence is high and the departure of key staff has left many of the remaining and new personnel feeling uncertain about their future.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that the school's work with pupils who are at risk of harm is generally strong. The safeguarding policy is appropriate. Staff understand their responsibility to refer any concerns they have about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspection evidence shows that the school works effectively with external agencies to secure support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Recruitment checks are robust and meet requirements. However, pupils are not safe from bullying and behaviour is not managed adequately and, therefore, safeguarding is not effective.

Pupils explained to inspectors that they still hear homophobic and racist language daily and staff agreed that this is typically the case. Pupils also report that bullying is commonplace, usually in the form of name-calling and verbal abuse. However, pupils say they do not report bullying as they should because they do not have faith in staff to take them seriously and take effective action. Some younger pupils accept that bullying is part of school life and cannot explain the difference between bullying and falling out with friends.

Pupils' attendance has improved significantly but remains below the national average. Improvements have come about because leaders have introduced robust systems to make sure regular attendance is encouraged. For example, staff call

home on the first day that pupils are absent to check that all is well and establish the reason for the pupils' absence. However, the number of pupils who are persistently absent remains a concern, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### **External support**

The school's new trust has taken a hands-on approach to supporting the interim principal in establishing exactly what has to be done to tackle the deeply rooted weaknesses in leadership and approaches to pupils' behaviour. However, it is too soon to establish the effectiveness of these actions. The local authority maintains support for the school and has been particularly helpful in reviewing child protection procedures and helping the school to establish robust recruitment checks. Nevertheless, despite some effective work, the school's outgoing trust, the diocese and the local authority have failed to help the school establish strong and effective leadership with sufficient urgency.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should make sure that:

- all staff understand the school's behaviour policy and have the confidence, skills and effective support needed to implement it consistently and effectively
- the number of exclusions and the number of times that pupils are removed from lessons are reduced
- immediate action is taken to improve relationships between staff and leaders and between pupils and teachers
- staff and pupils have a thorough understanding of bullying and improve the consistency with which incidents are tackled
- systems to analyse behaviour incidents continue to be developed so that trends and patterns are spotted quickly and dealt with effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive of LEAF Academy Trust, the chief executive of Abbey Multi-Academy Trust, the chair of the advisory board, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt  
**Senior Her Majesty's Inspector**