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29 March 2017

Miss Alison Mander  
Headteacher  
Grange Technology College  
Haycliffe Lane  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD5 9ET

Dear Miss Mander

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Grange Technology College**

Following my visit with Deano Wright, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Jeremy Haigh and Stephen Crossley, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 15–16 March 2017, 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 that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in May 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hayter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2016.**

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and accelerates the rate of pupils' progress in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
  - make effective use of assessment information to match tasks to the needs of different groups of pupils, including the most able, those who have special educational needs or disability and those who speak English as an additional language
  - ask questions that challenge pupils and deepen their thinking
  - provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and speaking skills in lessons, and particularly to write at greater length.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - sharpening development plans so they focus more on the specific impact of actions taken
  - ensuring leaders at all levels more rigorously and systematically check the quality of teaching and provide teachers with helpful feedback
  - matching professional development activities more precisely to identified weaknesses in teachers' practice and checking that this results in improvements to teaching
  - making sure that all staff know who to go to if they have a concern about a pupil.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - ensuring teaching stimulates and interests pupils so they are more fully engaged in learning
  - eliminating boisterous and aggressive behaviour at social times.
- Improve attendance by:
  - ensuring school provides an enjoyable, relevant and interesting experience for pupils each day
  - reducing persistent absence.
- Improve 16 to 19 study programmes by:
  - ensuring learners in key stage 4 are given the advice and guidance they need to make choices that match their planned next steps, and providing better careers guidance and support for university applications for sixth formers
  - improving the quality of teaching so that students make good progress in their chosen study programmes

- ensuring all students achieve at least a GCSE grade C in both English and mathematics
- raising levels of attendance
- listening to the views of students and increasing their involvement in a relevant and fulfilling enrichment programme that better develops their life skills.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 15 to 16 March 2017**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the board of trustees and a trustee, and the chief executive officer of Southfield Grange Trust.

All areas identified for improvement were considered during the inspection. Inspectors also focused on the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the trust and headteacher have restructured the leadership team. This involved a reduction from three deputy headteachers to one and a reduction from nine to seven assistant headteachers. The new roles are closely aligned to the school improvement priorities.

The current headteacher is now formally seconded from Guiseley School until August 2018 and the executive headteacher from Guiseley School has increased his direct involvement in the school to two days per week.

Trustees continue to develop the future governance arrangements for the school with the regional schools commissioner. A newly formed school improvement board will meet for the first time in April 2017. The group includes trustees and governor representatives from Guiseley School. The improvement board intends to provide further challenge to leaders, focusing on the implementation of the school's improvement plan.

A full complement of permanent teaching staff is not in place and remains a concern. However, new permanent leaders and teachers are in place in the mathematics department. Leaders carefully track the extent to which pupils are taught by cover staff and short-term supply teachers to ensure that no group of pupils is disadvantaged by the staffing arrangements.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher, effectively supported by the executive headteacher, is the engine behind the drive for improvement in this school. The headteacher's authoritative presence, combined with her strong commitment to the progress and welfare of each pupil, permeates the school. Staff and pupils are unanimous in their respect for the positive changes being implemented.

The significant restructuring of the leadership team occurred without causing major

disruption. At the time of the inspection, this team had been in place for three weeks. They are being effectively supported to develop new ways of working, with a particular focus on understanding the impact of all aspects of their work on pupils' progress and attendance. Leaders are at different levels of effectiveness at this stage. Most, but not all, of their analysis and evaluation of different aspects of the school's work is increasingly accurate, leading to developments that are more effective.

In January, leaders introduced a requirement for teachers to use annotated seating plans for all lessons. The plans include a raft of information, including pupils' prior attainment and most recent assessment information. The use of this information is more effective in key stage 4 because it is based on each pupil's progress towards the qualifications they are taking. However, in key stage 3, the use of this information limits leaders' support to teachers, and teachers' guidance to pupils. Assessing younger pupils against criteria linked to anticipated grades at GCSE does not provide a clear enough picture of how well they are developing their knowledge and skills in preparation for key stage 4 study.

Leaders have also changed how they evaluate the overall effectiveness of teaching. This useful development, although still at an early stage, is giving leaders a more accurate view of the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning and progress. Visits to lessons, for different purposes and lengths of time, combined with detailed scrutiny of pupils' books, are helping leaders to link teachers' practice to the progress pupils make. Initially, and for some leaders still, these checks focused on teachers' compliance with the leaders' minimum expectations. Leaders recognise the need to move on swiftly to checking the impact of teachers' different approaches on pupils' learning and progress.

The specific targeting of training opportunities for different teachers and other staff has continued to develop since the last inspection. Leaders are aware that this needs to continue, particularly as the next phase of staff restructuring may lead to a wider range of staff undertaking new roles in the school.

In recognition of the unavoidable use of temporary teachers on long- and short-term supply contracts, leaders have put training and development sessions in place for these teachers. This is increasing the consistency of approach in lessons when pupils' substantive teachers are absent. Although some pupils are concerned about the number of different teachers they have for some subjects, they all agreed that greater consistency in lessons is helping them to learn more effectively. Pupils say that they know what to expect so they can get on with learning. Inspectors observed the impact of this improvement as most lessons got off to a swift start. As a result, pupils' engagement with learning has improved since the last inspection.

Approximately one fifth of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes those who are placed in the resource provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder. Many of these pupils also experience other forms of

disadvantage. Some are not proficient speakers of English. Leaders have not put into place an effective approach to identify the individual needs of this complex group of pupils. As a result, teachers do not have sufficient information to help them plan lessons that fully meet these pupils' needs.

Leaders and support staff collect information about pupils' responses in lessons, including intervention sessions. However, they are not using the information they collect to evaluate the effectiveness of the different approaches for pupils who find learning difficult.

While reviewing the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, it became apparent that leaders have not put in place an effective approach to developing pupils' phonics knowledge and reading skills. The lack of systematic teaching of phonics hinders pupils' progress in reading and spelling. This includes some of the most able pupils who are fluent speakers of English as a second language, as well as pupils who have cognition and learning difficulties. A new programme, focused on developing pupils' love of reading, is proving effective for those who are competent readers. The library was pleasantly buzzing with pupils keen to choose books during the inspection.

The 16 to 19 study programmes continue to develop, in line with other areas of the school. The support provided by Oldham Sixth Form College has led to improvements in the effectiveness of teaching. Leaders recognise that, in order to increase the pace of development, plans specific to the sixth form need to be more tightly focused on the identified improvement priorities.

The board of trustees has been working with the regional schools commissioner to secure the future governance arrangements for the school. This complex task has not distracted trustees from supporting and challenging leaders to ensure a good pace of progress against the improvement plan. The minutes from trustee meetings do not reflect the level of challenge that they have provided. It was clear from discussions that trustees have a detailed knowledge of progress against the plan and the barriers to securing further improvements.

Trustees have made progress in improving the use of pupil premium funding. The independent review indicated that the grant was not being spent for the purpose intended. This, in part, prompted the staff restructuring programme. The first phase of reshaping the leadership team has generated sufficient savings to ensure that the new pupil premium plan can be resourced adequately and the impact of actions can be measured.

Safeguarding remains effective. Leaders have ensured that staff are aware of how to report concerns about pupils or colleagues. The unmissable posters of the key people in all areas of the building, combined with the ongoing training programme, have boosted staff confidence about their responsibilities and their ability to respond to pupils' concerns and wellbeing.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Pockets of highly effective teaching in different subjects and different year groups were evident, both during visits to lessons and in the progress seen in pupils' books. However, leaders recognise that, typically, teaching remains less than effective.

Recent training of the effective use of questioning is having a positive impact as teachers are developing the skills to target questions at different pupils according to their level of understanding.

Teachers give increasingly effective verbal and written guidance to pupils. Some pupils identified how they had used this guidance to improve their understanding and develop their knowledge. For example, in a sixth-form chemistry lesson, the teacher's probing questions ensured that students understood the concept being taught by the end of the lesson.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Improvements in how pupils conduct themselves in lessons and around school have continued since the last inspection. Leaders are not complacent. They have recently ramped up their expectations for pupils' behaviour. For example, pupils now have fewer chances to be late for lessons or interrupt their own or others' learning before sanctions are applied. Pupils who were experiencing a day in the isolation room for the first time, as a result of the new expectations, all showed a level of remorse that indicated that they understood the leaders' message that every lesson counts.

Inspectors explored with leaders the reasons why some pupils, particularly those in Year 11, have left the school this year. The number was not inappropriately high and staff have detailed knowledge of how pupils are tracked until either they are registered at another school or the responsibility for their safety is accepted by another agency.

Attendance levels are stuck at a level which is below that found in most schools, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders continue to develop different strategies based on their detailed tracking of the effectiveness of different approaches. The recent full-time deployment of a member of the school's community team to focus on the 130 families of Roma pupils is beginning to have an impact. A trustee has recently shadowed this member of staff during community and home visits to encourage pupils into school. This has given the trustees a better insight into the barriers and challenges facing individual pupils, their families and leaders in securing better attendance.

Attendance of Year 13 students has remained strong, although this is not the case for students in Year 12. Leaders are aware that they need to address the poor

attendance of Year 12 students on a football academy programme linked to the school.

### **Outcomes**

At the time of the inspection, the third collection of assessment information had just happened for most year groups and the full analysis of this information had not been completed.

The school's current assessment information indicates that pupils' progress is variable across subjects and year groups as a result of inconsistencies in teaching. Leaders are grappling with the requirements of the reformed GCSE courses and post-national curriculum level assessments. They are continuing to review their approach to securing greater consistency in the assessment of pupils' learning.

### **External support**

Leaders from Guiseley School continue to provide effective support to this school. This includes support for the special educational needs coordinator, as well as other leaders.

Staff from Oldham Sixth Form College continue to provide effective support to the sixth-form leaders and other teachers across the school to develop their teaching practice.

The trustees have extended contracts with other external advisers, specifically relating to the development of governance and the implementation of the school improvement plan. Leaders are responsive to the high-quality termly feedback and additional challenge they receive from external consultants.