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26 February 2020

Cara Walker  
Head of School  
Chellaston Academy  
Swarkestone Road  
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Derby  
Derbyshire  
DE73 5UB

Dear Ms Walker,

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Chellaston Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 11 February 2020, with John Edwards, Ofsted Inspector, 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 that 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 July 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Peak Multi Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in July 2019.**

#### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Urgently address the weaknesses in the safeguarding arrangements in the sixth form by ensuring that
  - thorough checks are carried out to establish the reasons for students' absence
  - the correct register codes are used to identify the reason for absence
  - work experience checks are rigorous and students are monitored regularly when on work placement for an extended period
  - students' attendance improves, particularly in Year 12.
- Leaders must swiftly provide the support needed to ensure that the leadership of the sixth form is good and that any shortcomings in the provision are fully addressed.
- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' progress in all key stages by ensuring that the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching is addressed.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 11 February 2020**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents including the Ofsted statement of action, the school action plan and the self-evaluation. The safeguarding and child protection policies were reviewed. The single central record of staff was checked. The electronic system of recording safeguarding concerns was checked.

An inspector, along with leaders, reviewed a range of information relating to the attendance and work experience of students in the sixth form.

Inspectors met with the head of school and senior leaders, including the head of the sixth form. They spoke with governors and trustees. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders. Inspectors spoke with Year 12 and Year 13 students. They met a group of staff. They observed pupils' arrival at school.

This monitoring inspection focused on aspects of leadership and management, provision in the sixth form and pupils' safeguarding and welfare.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured. There have been staffing changes. A new leader of the sixth form is in place. A new chair of the local governing body has been appointed by the trust. Four additional governors have been recruited.

### **The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection**

Pupils and students in the sixth form receive a great deal of expert care, particularly from the interim designated safeguarding leader. They value the 'hub' enormously. Many said that they appreciate the support and guidance they receive from staff. However, senior leaders do not check well enough that all staff implement the safeguarding policy. For example, leaders have introduced an electronic system to record safeguarding concerns. Not all staff are using the new system well. Records of safeguarding concerns are not sufficiently detailed and are not always accurate. It is not always clear what action staff have taken to support pupils when concerns have been raised. Leaders have not followed the school's policy in recruiting new staff. They have not checked information carefully enough.

Leaders are ambitious to improve the quality of sixth-form provision. They are clear about the improvement actions needed and realistic about the challenges that they face. They are ambitious to ensure that students are safe, attend regularly and

receive an excellent education. Leadership of the sixth form has improved. A new head of the sixth form, an existing senior leader, was appointed to the role in September 2019. This leader is well regarded by students for his 'approachability, listening skills and care'.

Progress leaders for Year 12 and 13 are now in post. The rigour with which leaders now monitor students' academic needs is improving. For example, more formal arrangements are in place to ensure that students use their private study time productively. Leaders have put in place a 'reflective log' to promote students' independence. Leaders are aware that Year 12 students are more positive about these changes than students in Year 13. Some Year 13 students told inspectors that they find the 'reflective log' was onerous. Leaders accept that they need to think more carefully about how to meet the needs of the older students without compromising the much-needed rigour.

The arrangements to monitor students' attendance have improved. Leaders have appointed an attendance officer and better checks are in place. Staff use register codes appropriately. Students' attendance has improved considerably, particularly in Year 12. Attendance in Year 13 needs to improve further.

Leaders have addressed the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection relating to the arrangements for students' work experience. They have improved the procedures to check on the suitability of placements. They have put appropriate risk assessments in place. Leaders have appointed an administrator to manage the administration of work experience. Leaders have processes in place to ensure that students are attending and safe.

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

Leaders have made some progress against the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The strategic leadership of the arrangements for safeguarding needs to improve further.

The head of school has a clear vision. She is ambitious to make sure that the school is one where all pupils achieve and become well-rounded individuals. She does not shy away from the challenges she faces to improve the school further. Appropriate improvement plans are in place. Leaders recognise the need to refine these plans so that they include sharper targets and monitoring.

Leaders are determined to create a positive and caring culture that supports pupils' academic success as well as their well-being. Leaders have started to act on the findings of an external audit. Staff work well with external agencies to get the right support for pupils. The head of school is committed to ensuring that pupils' welfare is 'everyone's business'. An associate senior leader has been appointed to promote and support pupils' and teachers' mental health. External agencies, including the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), have delivered

training and provided support to staff. The school now has counsellors to support any pupils who may need this.

Much of this positive and important work is in its infancy. Leaders do not have a strategic overview of safeguarding practices. They do not monitor the arrangements well enough to make sure that all staff follow the agreed policies. Not all staff record concerns in the same way. The records indicate that they do not have an agreed understanding of what should be recorded as peer-on-peer abuse, for example. This means that leaders do not have an accurate overview of incidents. They cannot always check that the right support is in place. They do not yet know that the new arrangements are having the impact needed.

The quality of local governance has improved. The trust has appointed a new chair of the local governing body with the skills required of the role. Additional governors have been appointed. These are positive changes but again, they are in their infancy. Trustees recognise that they are a new and developing trust. They monitor the quality of local governance. They recognise the need to keep the scheme of delegation under review in order that it continues to be fit for purpose.

The school has experienced a period of significant turbulence. Leaders have begun to think about staff workload and have taken steps to support and promote staff's well-being. Staff said that they appreciate many of senior leaders' efforts, but some remain concerned that their workload is too high. Leaders are keen to continue their efforts to support staff. They recognise that there is more to do.

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

- The restructuring of the senior leadership team has increased the school's capacity to make further improvements.
- The quality of local governance is improving. The chair of the local governing board is knowledgeable and ambitious to improve the school.
- New leaders are having positive effect. The leadership of the sixth form is improving this provision.
- Sixth-form students' attendance has improved. The attendance officer is ensuring that the correct register codes are used. Thorough checks are undertaken to identify the reason for absence. Year 12 students' attendance is now improving.
- Procedures to manage students' work experience have improved. There is greater administrative capacity to carry out the necessary checks. Leaders' plans to ensure students' safety while students are on work experience are thorough.

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

- Senior leaders' oversight and monitoring of safeguarding is not rigorous enough.

- Year 13 students' attendance, although improving, is not as good as that of students in Year 12.
- Some staff continue to be concerned about workload and well-being.