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9 September 2021

Kieran Scanlon  
Principal  
The Sir Robert Woodard Academy  
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West Sussex  
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Dear Mr Scanlon

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Sir Robert Woodard Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

**Context**

Since the school's last inspection in January 2018, curriculum directors have been appointed to oversee subject areas. A new acting chair of governors has also been

appointed. Additionally, the number of pupils on the school roll has increased by approximately 300.

## **Main findings**

The changes you have made since your appointment as principal have been grounded in your strong moral purpose and high ambitions for pupils. Trustees, governors and staff share your values. Leaders and teachers have a developing understanding of the best way to structure learning so that pupils know and remember more over time. Staff now check how well pupils learn more thoroughly. There is a broader curriculum offer in key stage 4 and high proportions of pupils choose to study English Baccalaureate subjects.

Pupils are remembering more of what they have learned because the curriculum is better organised. You have provided high-quality training for staff. This has helped curriculum directors to review the important knowledge in each subject. Teachers' expertise is improving. They set more demanding work and use assessment increasingly effectively.

Pupils are more attentive in lessons. You have strengthened the routines that teachers use to help pupils concentrate on their work. Pupils are more enthusiastic about their learning and show a keener interest in subject content. The pupils I spoke to said that if they misbehave, teachers deal with it effectively.

Reading is an important part of your plans for improvement. You have worked hard to ensure that staff understand that this is a vital area of the school's work. Each subject department now has a 'reading champion' who helps teachers to think about how to improve pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Teachers have an increasingly accurate understanding of pupils' particular learning needs. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that staff are well trained in adapting learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SENCo works with colleagues from local primary schools in order to identify pupils who may need extra support when they start at the school. You are planning to further develop this support next year with the appointment of a specialist speech and language therapist.

You decided that pupils in Year 13 were no longer required to attend school after the summer half-term holiday because they had finished their examinations. You provided resources for students on preparing for the next steps of their education, training or employment. You explained that you have also provided learning for pupils in Year 11 in order to prepare them for their next steps. Those who were joining the sixth form, approximately one third of pupils in Year 11, started on the school's sixth form induction programme from this date.

Almost all staff think that the school has improved since the previous inspection. They feel valued by leaders and think that they are able to contribute to the decisions leaders make. Staff feel that their well-being is a priority for leaders. There is a growing sense of common purpose and high expectations among staff.

### **Additional support**

The trust has supported leaders in making improvements. The trust's director for education has worked closely with leaders in evaluating the changes that they have made. Leaders have found this useful. Curriculum directors have benefited from the support provided by the trust's subject specialists. They have helped leaders to think carefully about the structure and order of the curriculum.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, staff, the acting chair of governors, the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Woodard Academies Trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's improvement plan. I visited lessons with senior leaders to observe learning and met with a group of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Woodard Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**