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14 September 2021

Richard Woods  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Woods

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Hanson School**

Following my visit with Christine Durand, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Gabrielle Reddington, OI, Marc Doyle, OI, Phil Riozzi, OI, and Pritiben Patel, OI, to your school on 14 and 15 July 2021, 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 March 2020. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

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

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action toward the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.**

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

**The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.**

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Watt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 July 2021**

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection in March 2020, there have been significant changes to leadership and staffing. Over 20 teaching staff have left. The school has recruited teachers to replace those who have left, including new leaders of English and mathematics. Governors have appointed additional leaders to the senior team. These include two new assistant headteachers with responsibility for behaviour and attendance, and three associate assistant headteachers. They hold responsibilities for the provision of disadvantaged pupils, personal development and quality of education.

At the time of the inspection, pupils from Year 11 and students from Year 13 were not in school, having completed their programmes of study. Because of COVID-19, 150 pupils were self-isolating and being educated remotely.

### **The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

The school has been through a significant period of instability. There has been involvement from three successive multi-academy trusts since 2011. This has taken up a large amount of the headteacher's time. Uncertainty about academisation remains. This, along with the pandemic, has delayed the pace of progress in some aspects of the school's improvement work. Nonetheless, leaders, including governors, have been determined and resolute in their focus to improve the school. The headteacher has appointed committed leaders into vital roles, for example to lead on whole-school behaviour. Staff are proud to work at the school. Most staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree that the school is much improved since the previous inspection.

Leaders have rightly prioritised the most pressing and urgent areas, such as improving pupils' behaviour and attendance. They have successfully worked with a national support school (NSS), a national leader of education (NLE) and the local authority school improvement adviser to bring about rapid and sustained improvements. Together, they have significantly improved pupils' behaviour and attendance, despite the pandemic.

Leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum at key stage 3. From September 2021, leaders intend to implement a three-year key stage 3 curriculum. They have broadened and deepened the curriculum following a period in which the curriculum was narrowed. This means that pupils in Years 7 to 9 will study an appropriately broad range of subjects.

While much work has been done to develop an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, there is still more work to do. Subject leaders have set out their intent for the curriculum. However, some curriculum plans are more developed than others. For

example, there are well-sequenced curriculum plans in computing, modern foreign languages and history. In other subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, leaders have not identified the crucial knowledge that all pupils must know and remember over time. These plans do not identify precisely the sequence of learning. Additionally, some teachers are too focused on preparing for the GCSE examinations. This means that some pupils are not spending sufficient time learning important curriculum content.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has ensured that there is a consistent approach to supporting the weakest readers. Pupils who need to improve their reading receive effective support. This is contributing to pupils being able to read with increasing accuracy and fluency.

As well as supporting the weakest readers, teachers have begun to focus on improving all pupils' reading. Pupils take part in reading sessions during form time. They are beginning to read more regularly. However, literacy across the curriculum is less well developed. Some subject leaders have not carefully considered how to develop pupils' literacy in their subject. This work is in its infancy.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. Staff provide effective support for pupils in the specialist 'Additional Resourced Centre'. The SENCo has clear systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. The SENCo provides teachers with important information about how to support pupils through 'pupil profiles'. Staff have received training on how best to support pupils with SEND. When 'pupil profiles' are used effectively by teachers, they are enabling pupils to learn well. Yet, a few teachers do not consistently use the 'pupil profiles' or adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not receive the right support to fully access the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection. You and other leaders have raised the behaviour expectations for all pupils. Pastoral leaders have ensured that the school's new behaviour policy is applied more consistently by all staff. The atmosphere in and out of lessons is calm and orderly. Behaviour incidents and fixed-term exclusions continue to reduce. Pupils who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, knew what is expected of them and others.

Leaders have raised the importance of good attendance. Leaders with responsibility for attendance have increased the monitoring of pupils' absences. Regular home visits are carried out to check that pupils are safe if they are not at school regularly enough. Many parents report that they welcome this support from the school.

The school's improvement plan focuses on the right priorities. It shows clearly how leaders are continuing to address the priorities identified from the previous inspection. The plan sensibly sets out necessary actions to improve the school.

Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They evaluate effectively the improvements that are made against the school's improvement plan. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders.

### **Additional support**

The local authority and a NLE have provided extensive support and training for staff. These include support with developing the school's curriculum, conducting behaviour and attendance reviews. Leaders say that this has helped them to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. Teachers have benefited from training and support from a NSS. Leaders intend for this additional support to continue.

### **Evidence**

We scrutinised documents, including the school's development plan. We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including those with responsibility for safeguarding. We evaluated records related to safeguarding and the school's single central record. We met with several subject leaders, the SENCo and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. We met with a representative from the local authority and we spoke to members of staff.

We spoke to groups of pupils from different year groups. We also talked to pupils during breaks and lunchtimes. We visited a range of lessons, jointly with subject leaders. We scrutinised a small sample of pupils' work. We also considered 88 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 64 free-text responses and 117 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.