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Jane Hadlow  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hadlow

## **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Northampton International Academy**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 13 and 14 September 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in February 2022.

During the inspection, Clive Worrall, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust, trustees and representatives of the local authority, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, observed break and lunchtime, met with pupils and staff, scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding and sought the views of parents, pupils and staff through the Ofsted surveys. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Northampton International Academy remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.**

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

Since the previous inspection, the trust has made significant changes to the leadership of the school. The trust has appointed you as interim headteacher. Two deputy headteachers left and the trust appointed three new deputy headteachers. You have established clear areas of responsibility for each deputy headteacher. The leadership of safeguarding has

changed. Two new leaders have joined the safeguarding team, adding further capacity. An executive leader from the multi-academy trust has been working in the school. The trust has appointed a team of assistant special educational needs and disabilities coordinators to strengthen the school's ability to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders closed Prospect, the school's internal behaviour support area. The school welcomed pupils in Year 6 for the first time in September 2022. The school now has pupils in all year groups from Reception to Year 13.

Leaders, trustees and academy governors lead with clear purpose. They acted swiftly to bring about change after the previous inspection. Leaders prioritised addressing pupil and staff concerns about behaviour and safety. They changed the school day and made the behaviour policy clear. This led to significant positive change. Pupils and staff feel much safer in school now. Pupils know what is expected of them. Most wear their uniform with pride and are punctual. Classrooms and corridors are calm and orderly. Staff report that they are better supported by leaders. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy more consistently. Leaders know that they must work to make sure that behaviour continues to improve.

Leaders have a clear vision for providing a high-quality education to all pupils. Leaders and teachers have thought carefully about the curriculum for each subject. They have made sure that pupils can build their knowledge from Reception to Year 13. Leaders focus on identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders in the primary phase have brought about the necessary changes to the teaching of phonics. Well-trained staff teach phonics right from the start of Reception. Pupils who need help to keep up get the right support. In the secondary phase, teachers identify which pupils need help to improve their reading and make sure that they get it. Pupils in key stage 3 read each day in class. They carry their fiction or poetry books with them. They recommend books to each other. Leaders have plans to strengthen the culture of reading in the school.

The programme for personal development has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils value the programme more. Students in the sixth form benefit from a programme of work experience. They get better guidance about their next steps in education, training or employment. Pupils in the secondary phase see the value of what they learn in personal, social and health education. During discussions, pupils engaged thoughtfully with inspectors about equality, diversity and personal safety. Most pupils value the school's work to celebrate the diversity of the pupil body. They would like to see more of this in the future. Pupils appreciate the clear expectation that everyone is treated with respect. Incidents of bullying and discriminatory comments have decreased. Pupils said that most staff take reports of racist or homophobic comments very seriously. Pupils and parents also recognise that improvements are at an early stage. Like school leaders, they want to see lasting change and know that there is more work to do.

Trustees and the local academy board know the school well. They are focused on the pupils and the community. They have taken effective action to bring about the necessary changes. They have worked with school leaders to produce clear plans to improve the school. The local academy board and trustees hold leaders to account for standards in the school. Trustees are working tenaciously to overcome barriers like recruiting the right staff. They have thought carefully about making sure that improvements will have a lasting impact.

Trust leaders have provided effective support for the school. Trust leaders have been at the school every day and have had a significant impact on the culture of behaviour and safeguarding at the school. The trust is providing the support and challenge that leaders need to develop curriculum plans. Trust leaders have put in place a programme of coaching for school staff to improve their classroom practice.

Staff value the training that they have received from school leaders and the trust. Training links directly to school improvement priorities. Leaders are making good use of individual staff experience and expertise for the benefit of pupils. There are examples of this in the sixth-form team, the safeguarding team and in subject teams. Most staff believe that leaders support them with their well-being and workload.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. New leaders have reviewed and improved the school's policies and systems. Staff know and understand their roles and responsibilities well. Safeguarding staff work effectively with the school's pastoral, SEND, attendance and behaviour teams. The school is building effective partnerships with local agencies, including the local authority's Safer Communities team and the police. These changes are having a positive impact on the culture of safeguarding in the school.

The school has secured support from external partners, including the local authority. Leaders act quickly on advice received. The impact of leaders' responses is clear in improvements to the school's attendance, safeguarding and behaviour systems.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the East Midlands Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Aoife Galletly  
**His Majesty's Inspector**