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21 October 2022

Peter Gaul  
Principal  
King's Leadership Academy Hawthornes  
Fernhill Road  
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Merseyside  
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Dear Mr Gaul

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of King's Leadership Academy Hawthornes**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 October 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 took place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I held discussions with you, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, trustees, governors, the local authority and other senior leaders. We spoke about 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. In addition, I visited a sample of lessons and met with some pupils from all year groups to discuss their experience of school life. I reviewed samples of pupils' work. Furthermore, I examined a range of information, including the school development plan and safeguarding documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Kings Leadership Academy Hawthornes continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.**

Leaders should take further action to:

- ensure that the curriculum adopted provides all pupils with the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need, in a broad range of subjects, especially at key stage 3

- develop assessment strategies, so that leaders and teachers have a clear and consistent view about how well pupils are learning the intended knowledge outlined in the curriculum.

## **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased. There have been some changes to the staffing at the school, including at middle leadership level.

You and other senior leaders, with the support from the leaders of the Great Schools Trust, are taking the necessary steps to improve the quality of education for pupils at the school. For example, you and other leaders are in the process of improving how well the curriculum is designed. You and the leadership team are beginning to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. This is to ensure that staff appropriately meet the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Added to this, you are increasing the breadth and depth of academic subjects that pupils can study, particularly at key stage 3.

In addition to increasing the breadth of academic subjects, you are beginning to increase the range and depth of subject content. You are ensuring that the knowledge that underpins the curriculum is more comparable to the national curriculum, especially at key stage 3. Historically, this has not been the case. While you and other leaders are taking action to improve the quality of the key stage 3 curriculum, it is still too early to see the full impact of this work.

You are taking action to improve teachers' delivery of subject curriculums. You have ensured that staff benefit from both internal and external support where necessary, so that they can develop their thinking and explore current educational research and practice. Consequently, teachers are increasingly consistent in their approach when delivering subject curriculums. This is beginning to help pupils to know and remember more of their learning over time.

You and other senior leaders have made several changes to the ways in which you expect teachers to assess pupils' learning. In the classroom, teachers are increasingly adept at identifying and addressing any gaps in pupils' knowledge. The pupils with whom I spoke told me that they find this clear and helpful. You are also in the process of refining your systems to assess how well pupils have learned all the knowledge that they require by the end of each unit of work. This is beginning to enable teachers and leaders to establish how well pupils are learning the essential content of the curriculum. However, it is too soon to see if this is making a difference.

You and other senior leaders have taken suitable action to improve the quality of information that teachers now receive about the needs of pupils with SEND. This information is now much more detailed and helpful. Leaders of SEND are providing ongoing training to upskill teachers. This is so that they can use this information more effectively to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils.

You, other senior leaders and staff have been proactive in responding to the needs of the increasing numbers of pupils who require support with their reading knowledge. Across subjects, teachers explicitly identify key vocabulary that pupils must learn. This is helping pupils to widen their knowledge and understanding of subject-specific terms and concepts. Leaders of reading are putting in place a suitable range of provision to identify and support those with gaps in their reading knowledge. This includes support for those who speak English as an additional language. Increasingly, this is helping these pupils to catch up with their peers and to access the wider curriculum.

In conjunction with trust leaders, you have strengthened the checks that senior leaders make on the quality of the curriculum. You are in the process of training subject leaders to take a more active part in these checks as part of these improvements.

Alongside trust leaders, you have placed a suitable emphasis on the development and training provided to middle leaders. Subject leaders are also keen to continually improve the curriculum in their areas of responsibility. They are taking more ownership of improving the design of their subject curriculums in conjunction with teachers.

As a result of the training that staff have received, pupils are beginning to build more effectively upon their prior learning. They are starting to make links between their learning within and across subjects.

Trust leaders are strengthening governance. Governors have an increasingly clear and accurate understanding of the quality of education that the school provides. School leaders appreciate the support and challenge that trustees and governors provide. They told me that this is helping to accelerate the pace of improvements being made for pupils.

Staff are appreciative of the support they receive from leaders to manage their workload and support their well-being.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Great Schools Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Downing  
**His Majesty's Inspector**