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Moira Marder, Chief Executive Officer
Andy Mulcock, Chair of Trustees
The Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust
Cranbrook Education Campus
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Dear Moira Marder and Andy Mulcock

Summary evaluation of The Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust

Following the summary evaluation of The Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust (or 'the trust') in October 2022 when I was accompanied by Mary Davies and Christine Bulmer, Ofsted Inspectors, I am writing on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings.

Thank you for your cooperation during our visit to the trust on 10 to 13 October 2022. Please pass on our thanks to your staff and other stakeholders who kindly gave up their time to meet us.

The findings from the summary evaluation and a wider consideration of the trust's overall performance are set out below.

Summary of evidence gathering activities

For stage 1 of this summary evaluation, four schools were inspected between March and June 2022. All these inspections were carried out under either section 5 or 8 of the Education Act 2005 (the Act), as amended.

The inspection outcomes were:

- one school retained its grading of outstanding;
- one school improved from requires improvement to good;
- one school had its first inspection as a sponsored academy and was judged to be good; and
- one school received a section 8 inspection and remained good.

Over the course of the on-site visit to the trust, discussions were held with you, other senior staff, leaders of key aspects of the trust's work and operational staff. We met with five representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board. Telephone discussions took place with members of the trust. We visited six trust schools that had not been inspected during stage 1 of the summary evaluation process. In each of these schools, we met with the headteacher, other senior staff and representatives of the local governing board. Inspectors also conducted telephone surveys with headteachers of three other schools in the trust.

Context

The Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust comprises 13 schools – eight secondary schools, two primary schools, one junior school, one infant and nursery school and one all-through school. The schools are located in Plymouth and Devon local authorities. The trust was established in 2013.

The trust's schools vary in size from just below 210 pupils in Whipton Barton Junior School to around 1275 pupils in Queen Elizabeth's.

The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is higher than the national average, though this varies from school to school within the trust.

Two of the schools in the trust are Church of England schools and part of the Diocese of Exeter.

The trust board is made up of 13 trustees. This group is responsible for the strategic oversight and performance of the trust and its schools.

Main findings

Currently, the inspection outcomes for the trust's academies, including the most recent inspections, are as follows:

- one school is judged to be outstanding;
- five schools are judged to be good; and
- seven schools have yet to be inspected since joining the trust. One of these was judged outstanding, two were judged good, two were judged to require improvement and two were judged to be inadequate in their predecessor schools.

Impact of the trust on its academies – governance and delegation

- The trust's vision is 'to transform lives and strengthen our communities to make the world a better place'. This is realised through the trust's values of selflessness, ambition and collaboration. The trust's vision is fully understood and lived out by all who work within the trust.
- A rich web of communication routes, from networks to line management, as well as informal links, has been established. There are simple but repeated messages which mean that all leaders are clear about priorities.
- Trust leaders have implemented a rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation of each of their schools. Through regular 'health checks' and the use of highly experienced external education consultants to chair 'education scrutiny' and 'inclusion and social justice' panels, trust leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses within each of their schools. Trustees and local governors participate in the review of schools. This deepens their understanding of each school's strengths and areas in need of development.
- Trustees are passionate about the trust and dedicated to their roles. They are reflective and always seek to improve. For example, they have observed the operation of other multi-academy trust boards to develop their expertise. Trustees provide much helpful support to trust leaders. However, they are not sufficiently challenging to leaders to ensure rapid improvement in key priority areas, such as improving attendance and reducing suspensions.
- Members understand, and carry out, their roles effectively. They maintain a careful consideration of information about the performance of the trust and its potential growth.

Impact of the trust on its academies – leadership and management

- The trust's vision and values underpin all aspects of its work, including in the creation of policies and development plans. Trust leaders are outward looking. They work well alongside other multi-academy trusts to share expertise and to improve their ways of working.
- Effective processes are in place to review the work of the trust. Through the ongoing reviews of each school, trust leaders provide bespoke support to schools depending on their level of need. Schools are categorised as receiving either 'core', 'targeted' or 'intensive' support. The support provided has brought about demonstrable improvements over time.
- The trust's people strategy is impressive. Teachers and other staff have a well-designed programme of both training and development linked to their level of experience and aspiration. In particular, the aspiring headteacher

programme enables the trust to identify people with headship potential and then offer them bespoke training to prepare them. Integral to this is ensuring that these aspiring headteachers fully understand, and live out, the trust's vision and values for when they move into headship. Staff at the trust are overwhelmingly positive about the support and development they receive.

- An external review of the whole governance structure was conducted recently. This has led to some changes in how governance is organised and operates at all levels. As a result, the scheme of delegation, which identifies the areas of responsibility for local governing boards, has been revised. Local governors now understand their responsibilities more clearly. They are able to articulate the strengths and areas to develop in their schools and have the knowledge and ability to challenge headteachers to bring about improvement.

Impact of the trust on its academies – curriculum and quality of education

- The trust has designed a curriculum that ensures each pupil receives 'core content' within each subject. Schools have the autonomy to design their own curriculum, but understand that the core content must be included. School leaders appreciate this level of autonomy. They adapt the trust curriculum to meet their individual priorities and context. In the stage 1 inspections, the curriculum was described as 'innovative' and 'ambitious'.
- The primary curriculum includes a relentless focus on ensuring that pupils can read fluently. Since September, this expertise is being used in secondary schools to support pupils in Year 7 who need it. In both primary and secondary schools, there is a strong emphasis on ensuring that the needs of disadvantaged pupils are met well. Over many years, the proportions of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who pass the phonics screening check in Year 1 and who attain at least a 'standard pass' in mathematics and English at secondary school has risen considerably.
- Trust leaders use their range of effective monitoring processes to assure themselves of the effectiveness of the curriculum. At the heart of the trust's work is collaboration. Through networks and coaching, leaders and teachers are supported very well to reflect on, and adapt, their approaches in a drive for continual improvement. One member of staff told inspectors, 'There is always someone I can call on if I need help.'
- In some schools inspected at stage 1 of this summary evaluation, the needs of some pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were not met well enough. Trust leaders acknowledge this and have redesigned their approach. The revised SEND strategy for this year builds on work done in previous years. This includes more accurate identification of pupils' needs, bespoke staff training and involvement of external experts, such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists. This revised

approach was introduced in September and has been embraced by trust staff at all levels. However, its impact is yet to be seen.

Impact of the trust on its academies – behaviour and attitudes

- The trust provides model policies for behaviour and attendance for schools to use should they wish to. However, most schools adapt this policy to suit their own individual needs and circumstances. When schools choose to adopt their own policy, trust leaders ensure that each policy has a level of consistency in approaches to managing behaviour and attendance that reflects the trust's ethos and values.
- There have been clear improvements in pupils' behaviour over time in all schools. Behaviour was judged to be either outstanding or good in all of the schools inspected during stage 1 of this summary evaluation. The published inspection reports comment positively on behaviour with quotes such as 'pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary' and 'pupils behave well in lessons. They are calm when moving around the school and are punctual to lessons'.
- School leaders communicate the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour. They are passionate about creating classrooms that are 'disruption free'. However, the strategies in place to support a minority of pupils who continue to exhibit challenging behaviour have not impacted well enough. As a result, the level of suspensions in some secondary schools has been, and remains, high. There are also some groups of pupils, particularly those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, who do not attend school regularly.
- The trust monitors behaviour and attendance through its ongoing review processes and analysis of trust data. As a result of this monitoring, trust leaders have developed a multi-faceted approach to continued improvements to behaviour and attendance. Trust and schools leaders are committed to identifying more accurately why some pupils do not attend regularly through greater use of staff, including an education welfare officer, to work alongside families. Each school is committed to meeting the needs of groups of pupils and individuals, including those with SEND, and those who may be disadvantaged, more closely. These new approaches are in their infancy and will require more time to embed and impact fully.

Safeguarding

The trust ensures there are robust procedures in place to safeguard pupils. The trust's model policy, which schools adapt to meet their own individual circumstances, is comprehensive. Key aspects in relation to statutory guidance are included.

Through the policy, staff across the trust are directed to and made aware of the warning signs which indicate that a pupil may be at risk.

Safeguarding training is comprehensive for all staff and governors. This training forms an important part of induction for those new to the trust. The expert knowledge of the trust's safeguarding lead is used to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding and training. The lead uses this information to adapt policy and practice and to inform future training plans.

The safeguarding arrangements at all four schools inspected in stage 1 of this summary evaluation were judged to be effective. The published inspection reports highlight many positive aspects of safeguarding at the schools, such as 'leaders, including governors and trust leaders, continue to strengthen safeguarding practice by keeping it under review' and 'leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. They ensure that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility'.

Recommendations

- Trust leaders recognise that the attendance of some pupils, particularly those who are more vulnerable, is too low in some schools. Strategies to improve attendance that have been put in place need to fully embed so that attendance improves.
- The number of pupils who are suspended in some secondary schools is high. Trust leaders have ensured that each school has a clear approach to improving behaviour and decreasing suspensions. These approaches need to impact fully to reduce suspensions.
- Trust leaders have recently developed their strategy to better meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. This strategy needs to be evaluated to determine the impact it has on pupils' education, attendance and behaviour, and then adapted in light of the evaluation.
- While trustees are aware of the most important areas that need to be improved across the trust, they have not been as challenging as they need to be in securing improvements. Trustees must now hold trust leaders to account more rigorously to bring about more rapid improvement in the identified areas.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Academies that are part of the trust

School information				Most recent inspection		
URN	School name	Local authority	Date joined trust	Was latest S5 inspection after school joined trust?	Inspection date	OE grade
144072	Exwick Heights Primary School	Devon	2017-04-01	No	2011-11-23	1
145404	West Exe School	Devon	2018-03-01	Yes	2022-06-08	2
136668	Lipson Co-operative Academy	Plymouth	2022-01-01	No	2021-11-04	2
136646	Queen Elizabeth's	Devon	2021-02-01	Yes	2022-05-18	2
139604	Marine Academy Primary	Plymouth	2020-04-01	Yes	2022-03-16	1
142805	St James School	Devon	2016-05-01	No	2015-03-25	2
141514	Cranbrook Education Campus	Devon	2015-09-01	Yes	2018-05-10	2
146578	Whipton Barton Junior School	Devon	2019-03-01	No	2018-03-08	3
136142	All Saints Church of England Academy	Plymouth	2021-01-01	No	2019-10-02	3
139682	Isca	Devon	2013-10-01	Yes	2016-10-19	2
147401	St Luke's Church of England School	Devon	2020-02-01	No	2019-06-19	4

146600	Whipton Barton Infants and Nursery School	Devon	2019-03-01	No	2013-03-07	2
147967	Marine Academy Plymouth	Plymouth	2020-04-01	No	2017-11-23	4

Schools highlighted received either a section 5, section 8 or monitoring inspection in stage 1 of the MAT SE