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Anouska Gardner
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Dear Mrs Gardner

Special measures monitoring inspection of Barlby High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 30 November and 1 December, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November 2021.

During the inspection, Katie North, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust (Hope Sentamu Learning Trust), trustees and governors 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. We also carried out lesson visits, conducted work scrutiny, spoke to pupils and to staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Barlby High school remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

I am of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the senior leadership team. Leaders have also appointed a new member of staff to oversee attendance at the school. Two new parent governors have been appointed to the local governing board.

Planning and teaching of the curriculum continues to improve. Leaders have made significant changes to what will be taught and in what order. In science, for example, the curriculum is now carefully organised so that pupils build on their previous learning. There are planned opportunities for staff to reteach important knowledge so that pupils remember more over time. Leaders have taken account of gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills that developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are working effectively to address these gaps.

Assessment of what pupils know and can do is still too variable. Staff are now checking pupils' understanding in lessons more regularly. However, this approach is not consistent across the school. Some teachers move on before all pupils have understood the important information required for the next stage of their learning. Consequently, gaps remain in pupils' understanding. The detail in pupils' written work does not always reflect the high standards that leaders expect.

Improving pupils' literacy is a priority. This includes support for those in the early stages of learning to read. A dedicated programme to support the weakest readers is now well established. This is having a positive impact on helping pupils improve their reading. Leaders' plans to prioritise literacy across the curriculum are well thought out. However, these plans are not well established in lessons.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education is now embedded across the school. Pupils remember some of the important messages it contains. This includes British values such as tolerance and respect for others, and how to stay safe outside of school. The 'Respect' programme, which takes place in form time, supports these important messages. However, teaching of the 'Respect' programme is still too variable. Pupils do not remember enough of what they learn during form time.

Leaders are taking effective action to improve behaviour at the school. There is a focus on enabling pupils to make positive choices about behaviour. Reward visits and events in school recognise these improvements. Pupils who are removed from lessons or suspended from school now receive more effective support. Repeated incidents of serious poor behaviour are reducing. However, staff still do not use the behaviour system consistently. Pupils continue to experience low-level disruption in lessons. Leaders recognise that instances of poor behaviour must reduce more quickly to ensure pupils' learning is not affected.

Leaders have developed systems to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum across the school. This is used to identify additional staff training needs and support professional development. The trust is providing specific support for some staff and departments in order to secure rapid improvement. This support has been effective in addressing

weaknesses in curriculum design. It is too early to evaluate whether this is translating into more effective curriculum implementation or improvements in pupils' outcomes.

Pupils feel safe at school. Areas where some pupils did not feel safe, such as the toilets, are now less of a concern to pupils. Pupils have a trusted adult they would speak to if they were worried. Nevertheless, they are still not confident that their concerns would be addressed effectively by staff, particularly where bullying is concerned. A minority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire also said pupils were unsafe at the school. Leaders recognise there is still work to do to ensure all concerns are dealt with quickly.

Leaders have sought the input of several external agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. For example, a safeguarding audit helped leaders to identify the concerns some pupils had about areas of the school site. Additionally, a review of specific curriculum areas clarified the actions that were required to bring about more rapid improvement. These evaluations have been valuable for leaders to assess the impact of the work they have already carried out and identify additional areas for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust, the regional schools' commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

John Linkins
His Majesty's Inspector