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Jack Davies
Principal
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Dear Mr Davies

Special measures monitoring inspection of Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 6 and 7 December 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 require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in March 2022.

During the inspection, Marian Feeley, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Claire Copeland, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Jason Philipsz, Ofsted Inspector (OI) and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) and other representatives of the trust 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 visited lessons, spoke to a wide range of pupils, looked at pupils' work and observed pupils' behaviour. We scrutinised school documents, talked to many staff, met with a group of parents and took into account the responses to the staff and parent surveys. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Brighton Aldridge Community Academy 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

You started work at the school in June 2022 and your substantive role began in September 2022. The trustees have removed the local governing committee and temporarily replaced it with an interim executive board (IEB), chaired by the CEO. They have also established a group of parents whose views they seek regularly. About a quarter of the current staff have joined the school since the last inspection. A number of senior and middle leaders also took up their posts after the last inspection. For this inspection, I focused primarily on personal development, behaviour and attitudes, and leadership and management, including safeguarding. These are the aspects of the school that were judged inadequate in March 2022. However, we also gathered evidence about the quality of education.

You have rightly prioritised improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The impact of leaders' actions is very clear. Pupils are more positive about their education and their futures. The school is, overall, calm and orderly. New approaches to managing behaviour mean that pupils are expected to focus, concentrate and work hard in lessons. They also have a greater understanding of the importance of showing respect to others. Suspensions have fallen sharply. Many pupils, parents and staff told us that they can see a huge difference in the school in a relatively short space of time. Pupils are much more involved in the life of the school and see new opportunities to develop their talents and interests. The majority of parents would now recommend the school to others. Communication with parents is frequent. The culture of the school is improving rapidly.

There is still some low-level disruption in lessons because not all staff are implementing the new approaches to managing behaviour effectively and consistently. Although much reduced, a minority of pupils continue to use derogatory or discriminatory language. Some younger pupils, in particular, told us that they do not feel entirely safe at school because of this kind of behaviour. Not all pupils are confident about raising any worries they might have with adults. You and other leaders have taken steps to raise pupils' attendance, but currently too many pupils miss too much school. Leaders have introduced a new approach to personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in order to make sure pupils learn about such things as respecting others, how to keep themselves safe and how to maintain healthy relationships. This new provision includes pupils leading assemblies about important, relevant issues and topics. However, this is not yet having the full impact you intend. Older pupils, including sixth-form students, do not consistently feel this approach is meeting their needs yet.

Members of the IEB are providing strong governance and oversight. They have an accurate and realistic view of the school and they report regularly to trustees. They challenge you and other leaders robustly. While they monitor and evaluate the school's progress very regularly against the detailed actions in the school's improvement plan, this could be strengthened further. Indicators of the impact of leaders' actions are not specific enough to allow members of the IEB to measure the school's progress as precisely as they could. Members of the IEB have ensured that trust officers work effectively with

leaders and staff in the school to improve provision. They also commission external consultants to gain regular, objective, useful views about the school's effectiveness.

Pupils' GCSE examination outcomes in 2022 were low, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. You have made sure that leaders have begun to address this through developing the curriculum and how it is taught. This work is at a relatively early stage overall. Pupils' achievement varies widely across the school. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. While these needs are met more effectively in the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, the Swan Centre, provision in lessons across the rest of the school is inconsistent. It is unclear what actions leaders are taking to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement. You and other leaders have introduced new approaches to training staff and providing time for them to work together. It is too soon to see a secure, solid impact of these new initiatives on pupils' outcomes.

You have made a range of essential improvements to safeguarding. Safeguarding is now effective. Leaders train staff appropriately. This means staff have the knowledge that they need to support pupils and to identify any concerns. Staff refer such issues promptly and appropriately. Leaders make sure that the right help is put into place for pupils and liaise with external agencies well. Safeguarding leaders have in-depth knowledge about pupils. While leaders' records of issues and actions have improved since the last inspection, these could be, at times, more comprehensive. There are other aspects of safeguarding that need to be sharpened further, for example making sure that records of staff training are up to date, logging all recruitment checks fully and implementing any necessary risk assessments promptly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Aldridge Education multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Brighton and Hove. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
His Majesty's Inspector