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26 January 2023

Carl Smith
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Dear Mr Smith

Special measures monitoring inspection of Woodlands Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 13 and 14 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 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, Heather Hawkes, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the chair of trustees, and the chair of the local governing board, the actions that leaders have 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, met with staff and pupils, discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at samples of pupils' work and scrutinised a range of different documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Woodlands 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 school should take further action to:

- ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to help pupils quickly become accurate and fluent readers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last monitoring inspection, leaders have had a particular focus on 'stage three' of the school's action plan. This stage of the plan has a sharper focus on the quality of education provided to pupils. Therefore, this monitoring inspection focused mainly on this aspect of the school's provision.

It is clear to see the progress that you and your leaders have made in some of the areas highlighted during the previous inspection. For example, they have focused on ensuring education, health and care (EHC) plans are updated and regularly reviewed. The training that leaders have provided has enabled staff to produce clear targets for pupils that relate to their emotional and behavioural needs. Parents and carers appreciate that leaders have shared these targets with them. However, leaders have not yet ensured that teachers receive detailed information about pupils' additional learning needs. This has led to some teachers providing work for pupils that is either too easy or too difficult.

Leaders have worked effectively with teachers to review curriculum plans for subjects. This has led to some subject choices at key stage 4 being changed to widen opportunities for pupils. The motor vehicle qualification has now been changed to engineering to encompass a broader range of knowledge and skills. Leaders have developed some curriculum areas more than others. For example, mathematics has been logically sequenced to ensure that pupils learn key concepts at the right time and at the right level. However, leaders' ambitions for science have not been realised. The curriculum in this subject has not been thought about carefully enough to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Learning has not been broken down into smaller steps where the important knowledge and skills are clearly identified. As a result, there is a 'one size fits all' approach taken in science which leaves many pupils unable to remember the important knowledge they need. Leaders have not yet made sure that teachers know exactly what to teach, and when, in all subject areas.

Leaders have raised the profile of reading particularly in Year 7, where pupils have daily reading sessions after lunch. They have also undertaken further assessments of pupils' reading ability. This has highlighted a significant number of pupils who are not yet confident readers. Leaders are aware that this situation means more needs to be done to prioritise reading. The current weekly intervention is not regular enough to have the impact on pupils' reading that leaders desire. While there have been some improvements in the reading ability of some pupils, the lack of an age-appropriate phonics-based scheme and trained staff have slowed the progress that could have been made for all pupils.

Senior leaders from the multi-academy trust are determined to remove any barriers that may hinder the continued improvement of the school. Trust and senior staff expertise has helped to develop useful training and support for school staff. Many staff told us that this training has been effective in helping them improve their practice. Some of the planned support for staff has not been provided, due to illness and the lack of capacity to release

teachers to work with other staff in different schools. This has delayed some of the curriculum development work that is required in subjects.

Leaders have continued to ensure that their safeguarding practices are effective. The strong culture of safeguarding has meant that pupils were confident to tell us that they feel safe at school. Your staff use their training and knowledge of individual pupils to identify any potential concerns quickly. Leaders have also further developed their behaviour and attendance reporting. This has allowed them to celebrate pupils' achievements in improving their attendance or sustaining good attendance. Leaders also reward pupils when they demonstrate the positive behaviours that underpin the agreed ethos of the school.

Leaders from the multi-academy trust have used external support and expertise to provide them with an objective 'health check' on the school. This has provided useful information that has helped shape the type of support they will provide to the school. However, the trust's monitoring of the school's action plan is not as effective as it could be. This is due to some success criteria in the action plan not being precise enough. Leaders from the trust do not use clear success criteria when reviewing progress. Therefore, those responsible for the governance of the school do not always have the most accurate view of the progress leaders have made towards the outcomes stated in the action plan.

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

Yours sincerely

Dave Gilkerson
His Majesty's Inspector