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Mark Boughey
Principal
The Orme Academy
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Dear Mr Boughey

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of The Orme Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 18 January 2023, 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust 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. I also spoke with subject leaders of the English, mathematics and humanities faculties, visited lessons, spoke to pupils, looked at books and scrutinised policies and school documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

The Orme Academy continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teachers systematically and accurately assess if pupils have understood the key knowledge they have been taught and make use of assessment information to adapt their teaching where necessary
- ensure that all pupils who are at an early stage of reading receive the support they need to enable them to read with fluency and comprehension at an age-appropriate level.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staff changes. This includes changes to your leadership team. Additional leadership capacity has been created. This includes the appointment of lead practitioners for English, mathematics, science, and humanities. At the beginning of the current academic year, several new teaching staff joined the school across a range of subjects. This included a new head of mathematics. This is because some staff have left, but also because you were able to recruit additional teaching staff to strengthen the school. At the time of the inspection, the school was fully staffed.

You are taking effective action to improve the quality of education. You are taking the right steps in the right order to do so. This work is beginning to address the variability in the way in which the curriculum is implemented. You have worked effectively with subject leaders to redesign the curriculum to make sure the precise knowledge you want pupils to know is ordered sensibly. You have also introduced a consistent approach to lesson planning. Together, these measures are supporting teachers to design lessons that closely align with the intended curriculum. Leaders' plans to develop the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in order to ensure that they receive the support they need are appropriate and are beginning to have an impact. Increasingly, teachers think carefully about the individual needs of pupils and use this information to adapt their teaching to meet these needs.

Leaders have begun to tackle the weaknesses in assessment identified at the previous inspection. However, there is still variability in the use of assessment across the school. Teachers do not always identify if pupils have understood the things they have been taught. Because of this, teachers develop an overly positive view of pupils' progression through the curriculum, and gaps in pupils' knowledge are not closed quickly enough. This hinders learning. Leaders have also begun to address the weaknesses identified in reading. A small number of pupils are beginning to benefit from this intervention, but there are more pupils who would benefit from this support. Leaders are working with parents to help extend the support these pupils are receiving in their home life. This work is at an early stage, and there is more to be done.

You and your leadership team are ambitious and determined. You have a clear vision for how the school should be. Leaders are developing appropriate plans to address the shortcomings in the school. Leaders' plans are tightly focused on the areas that will make the biggest difference to the school. The trust provides a high level of targeted challenge and support. This is welcomed by school leaders who have benefited from leadership support in areas such as SEND and early reading. This support is helping to ensure improvements at the school are sustainable. Governors also provide valuable support and challenge.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Shaw Education Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and

the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Laney
His Majesty's Inspector