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Paul Todd
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Dear Mr Todd

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lansdown Park Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 26 April 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 was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in February 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders and the interim CEO of the multi-academy 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. I visited both school sites, where I visited lessons, looked at pupils' books and curriculum documentation and spoke with staff and pupils. I checked the procedures for keeping pupils safe and scrutinised documents, including the school's plans for improvement. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Lansdown Park 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 strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous monitoring visit, there have been further staffing changes, including leadership roles and responsibilities. The new teacher for science, physical education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) has started in post. These changes have had an impact on the improvement work already started. The consultation period for significant change to the organisation of the school has also taken place. This monitoring visit took place across both school sites. This enabled me to see the key stage 3 and 4 provision at the Rush Hill site, which was not visited during the last visit, as well as the continued improvements at the Stockwood site.

Leaders continue to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In most areas, they have maintained the momentum for improvement and built on the work already started. Although only a small number of views were given, parents and carers continue to report on the positive impact the school has on their child and them as a family. One commented, 'I have been very impressed with their knowledge and ability to support my child to succeed. It's the happiest she has been in years.' Pupils express a wholly positive view of the school and value how staff listen to and support them.

Leaders can now demonstrate the impact the overhauled curriculum has on the pupils who attend and then transition back into mainstream school or start at a specialist provision. The 12- and 16-week placements, for secondary and primary pupils respectively, are more established. In subject areas where the curriculum design is more embedded, such as art and English, there is an explicit rationale behind content choices. It is clear how these are sequenced to maximise pupils' learning for the short time they are at the school. Where necessary, there are additional cycles of learning for those pupils who are not yet ready to transition back into mainstream or on to their specialist provision. Subject leaders have carefully designed these cycles so that they build on pupils' learning from the initial placement. However, there are some areas of the curriculum that remain underdeveloped, and some of these lack ambition. Leaders recognise this in their self-evaluation.

The development of reading has continued. Staff continue to assess all pupils when they start at the school. This informs whether pupils are at the early stages of reading and require additional support. Pupils receive support that increases their fluency and confidence in reading. Leaders monitor its effectiveness to ensure pupils catch up. Reading continues to be prioritised in the timetable. For example, daily reading, texts to enhance learning in subjects other than English, and opportunities to listen to adults read aloud are provided. This is more successful with primary-age pupils. However, leaders are taking some action to improve attitudes and confidence in reading among older pupils. An example of this is older pupils from the Rush Hill site visiting primary-age pupils at the Stockwood site and reading with them.

Leaders have strengthened the personal development offer for pupils. This was identified as a next step during the previous visit. The 'personal development profiles' in primary were under development at the time of the previous visit. They are now in place and focus on the need for pupils to re-engage with learning and increase their capacity to

learn. They work successfully to measure the impact of the placement on each pupil and the extent to which they are increasing in resilience, confidence and self-awareness. Leaders have also taken action to strengthen personal development for key stage 3 and 4 pupils. Each phase has provision in place for PSHE, to meet the statutory requirements. Leaders have addressed the need to have capacity for a responsive curriculum. This does not take learning time away from the planned curriculum.

Leaders continue to develop how they check the effectiveness of their actions. In some areas, this has been strengthened. This includes measuring the success of pupils' reintegration into mainstream and gaining assurances about the effectiveness of the personal development offer. However, the ongoing identification of gaps and assessment of what pupils are remembering over time remains inconsistent across subjects. Systems and processes are not as well established as they are in other subjects. This inconsistency results in important aspects, such as the 'daily review', not having its intended impact. Some leaders have made appropriate use of monitoring and evaluation within their areas of responsibility. They have used this to inform further improvements, for example in English and art.

Leaders have addressed some weaker aspects identified during the previous monitoring visit. These include changes to the daily timetable to support one-to-one intervention, responsive PSHE sessions and ensuring a more successful afternoon learning session. Staff comment on how these decisions have also made a difference to pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Morale remains high. Staff are confident in the leadership of the school as they go through this period of significant change.

Governance is currently limited and provided mainly through the interim CEO. Staff have continued to access support to increase their knowledge and expertise. While some of this is subject specific and comes internally from the wider trust, there has been some external professional development to increase staff expertise in their approach to supporting pupils in the widest sense of their education.

I am copying this letter to the interim chief executive officer or equivalent of Learn@ Multi-Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for the City of Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Leanne Thirlby
His Majesty's Inspector