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26 May 2023

Victoria Warburton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Warburton

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Castle Wood Academy**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 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 and other senior leaders, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, other staff, 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. I also reviewed the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised curriculum planning, visited lessons and looked at a sample of pupils' work across several year groups. I met with pupils to listen to their experiences of their education and the things they had been taught. I reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. I have considered all of this in coming to my judgement.

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

### **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in leadership. You were appointed as interim headteacher in October 2022.

Leaders have been quick to begin to address the curriculum weaknesses identified during the most recent section 5 inspection. You and other senior leaders have carefully considered how the curriculum needed to be improved in some subjects. You have ensured that the curriculum for all subjects is now fully mapped out so that it prioritises the key knowledge and skills that pupils should gain. You have introduced curriculum 'learning journeys', which clearly identifies the objectives, prior knowledge, key vocabulary and assessment needed for teachers to follow. These are displayed in classrooms as a visual guide for pupils, enabling them to see how they are progressing on their learning journey and as a reminder of some of the key vocabulary and concepts they are acquiring on the way.

Leaders have strengthened the curriculum to make sure that all planning considers the curriculum in the early years. The key knowledge that children across all year groups learn is now clear to teachers, which ensures that links between each year's learning can be more easily made. This approach helps pupils to see connections. It also helps pupils to remember more.

You have continued to prioritise reading. A love of reading and books is widely promoted across the school. Leaders have, in collaboration with the trust, implemented a reading programme across all year groups, which focuses on comprehension and fluency. Phonics lessons have been extended to enable comprehension to be fully embedded, and staff have been fully trained in their delivery. Reading lessons are now clearly structured and focus on the important skills and knowledge needed.

A lot of the work around the curriculum is still in its first year of delivery, such as the 'learning journeys' and the use of reading assessment grids. Leaders are aware of the need to monitor the implementation of the curriculum carefully and rigorously, making adjustments as necessary, to assure themselves that all groups of pupils are achieving as well as they can.

Leaders have strengthened the culture of safeguarding at the school. There is an improved and shared understanding of the safeguarding training received by all staff. Everyone understands their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular safeguarding updates, and they are clear about the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding records are now more detailed and include all the actions undertaken. Trust leaders have completed an internal audit of the effectiveness of safeguarding, and an external audit has been completed.

Leaders and governors have a shared ambition for all pupils to receive a good quality of education, which supports them to develop as well-rounded individuals. Governors are well informed about the changes that leaders have implemented. You have worked with leaders and governors to identify the right priorities for improvement. Your plans to address these priorities are precise, appropriate and considerate of staff's workload. All staff are committed to implementing the improvements you have introduced.

Leaders have taken account of staff's workload and well-being. Staff value the support provided by leaders and the trust.

Leaders' engagement with Tall Oaks Academy Trust has, since the last inspection, been successful. Areas for improvement from the February 2022 section 5 report have been prioritised in the school's development plan. Staff have received helpful support and training, which has improved the curriculum in some subjects. Teachers commented positively on the collaborative approach that is now in place across the schools in the trust.

I am copying this letter to the CEO of the Tall Oaks Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Ashbolt  
**His Majesty's Inspector**