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Daniel Hatley  
Executive headteacher  
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Dear Mr Hatley

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Welling School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 and 5 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 was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in February 2022.

During the inspection, Russell Bennett, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Matea Marcinko, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Cristalina Fernandes-Bates, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Jan Shadick, Ofsted inspector (OI), and I discussed with you, senior leaders, the regional director of the multi-academy trust, staff, governors and pupils 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 met with subject leaders, visited lessons and looked at documentary evidence of improvement planning. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Welling school remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.**

### **The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

Since the last graded inspection of the school, in February, there have been several changes to the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders. In April 2023, a new headteacher and two deputy headteachers started working at the school.

The school continues to offer a broad and balanced curriculum. This meets the ambition of the national curriculum. Curriculum thinking in many subjects is undergoing development. Staff are gaining confidence in their curricular thinking. In lessons you ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding. Teaching staff ensure that pupils have more frequent opportunities for pupils to remember their prior learning. However, this is not routinely the case in all classes.

Staff are better able to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) than in the past. Pupils with SEND have contributed to the design of 'pupil passports' for pupils with SEND. As a result, the needs of pupils with SEND are taken more closely into account than was previously the case. You have provided training for staff in how to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' individual needs. There is still some variability in how effectively staff support pupils with SEND across the school, especially in how well teachers use the 'pupil passports'.

You are developing a culture of reading in the school. Pupils take part in whole-class reading in tutor time and in English lessons. You recognise that there is still work to do with pupils to ensure that these sessions are used effectively. Recent training has focused on encouraging teachers to read out loud with expression. Pupils who need support with early reading receive phonics support.

You have prioritised improving pupils' behaviour. Typically, the school is a more orderly environment where pupils can learn better than before. Since the last inspection, you have focused on ensuring that uniform rules are followed more closely by pupils. You have also focused on improving behaviour and on reducing lateness to lessons. You have trained teachers to be more consistent in their application of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils commented that behaviour is better but that it is inconsistently managed by some staff. They have greater confidence that staff will tackle bullying. For example, pupils use the online system for reporting bullying. Some pupils said that bullying continues to be an ongoing problem at the school.

In February 2022, inspectors noted weaknesses in the school's personal development and careers offer. Few pupils at that time took part in enrichment and extra-curricular clubs. Now you have put in place some clubs and activities, including sports and chess. You do not routinely track or monitor pupils' uptake of these enrichment experiences. You have also ensured that a careers programme is established. However, this is not securely in place for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Your leaders are not tracking pupils' careers opportunities carefully in order to increase coherence across the school.

Staff are well supported in terms of their workload and well-being. The multi-academy trust (MAT) provides professional development opportunities for staff. A team of lead practitioners work with subject leaders and teachers to develop their curricular thinking and pedagogy. The trust has allocated time with a teaching and learning coach to the school. An inclusion expert has helped to develop SEND provision. The regional director

visits the school regularly to monitor progress. The appointment of new senior leaders from April this year has helped to strengthen the leadership team.

The governing body is well informed about the progress the school has made and what the next steps are. The governing body visits the school frequently. It seeks the views of pupils, and parents and carers.

You and the senior team have an accurate view of where the school is and what needs to improve further. You have high ambitions for pupils at the school but there is much work to do for these to be fully realised.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong  
**His Majesty's Inspector**