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14 June 2023

Mat Galvin  
Headteacher  
The Macclesfield Academy  
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Cheshire  
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Dear Mr Galvin

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of The Macclesfield 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, staff, governors, the chair of governors of your academy sponsor and a representative from the local authority 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 visited lessons, spoke with pupils, undertook scrutiny of pupils' work and looked at other relevant documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**The Macclesfield 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:

- support subject leaders to refine the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each topic
- ensure that all teachers make effective use of assessment information to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

## **Main findings**

You were appointed to the role of headteacher at the start of the summer term in 2021. Since you joined the school, there have been some changes of personnel at both senior and subject leadership levels. Several teaching staff have left the school and others have joined. The local authority asked you to open a specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. This opened in September 2022. You are currently in a single-academy trust, sponsored by Macclesfield College. However, you are in the process of withdrawing from this arrangement to join a multi-academy trust.

You, and other senior leaders and governors, have made considerable changes to the structure of the curriculum. All pupils now experience a broad curriculum throughout their time at The Macclesfield Academy. You have removed the arrangements that limited some pupils' subject choices in key stage 4. You have ensured that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have access to a wide range of academic qualifications. Your high aspirations for pupils are evident through the increasing number of pupils who follow the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Currently, more than half of the pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 follow this suite of subjects. You have widened the key stage 3 curriculum and made it increasingly ambitious. You have ensured that there is coherence between the key stage 3 and 4 curriculums, so that pupils' learning builds over time.

You are developing subject leaders' expertise in curriculum design. You have given subject teams dedicated time to focus on curriculum development, and they have used this time well. Increasingly, subject curriculums are ambitious and carefully ordered. Teachers know the topics that they should teach to pupils and when this should be done. Senior leaders have ensured that subject leaders understand the importance of identifying the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and remember within each topic. However, in some subjects, leaders are still refining this knowledge. You and the senior leaders are continuing to work with subject leaders to ensure consistency across subjects.

You and the senior leaders are developing effective ways for teachers to assess what pupils know and can remember. These approaches help teachers to check effectively whether pupils have any gaps in their learning. However, some teachers currently make better use of this information than others. Moving forwards, you have plans to ensure that teachers are well trained to adapt their delivery of the curriculum to address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge.

You have prioritised reading. This includes strategies to support pupils to read fluently and often, such as 'First Chapter Friday', as well as a whole-school approach to developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. You have developed a programme to identify pupils, across all year groups, who have gaps in their reading knowledge. You employ staff who are trained in teaching phonics and developing pupils' reading fluency. These staff carefully target their support to help pupils who are struggling readers to catch up.

Pupils, parents and carers spoke positively about the changes that you have made to improve the quality of education at the school. Staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve, and these expectations are reflected in the changes to the curriculum. Governors have taken action to develop their expertise around the curriculum, for example through the recruitment of new members who have the relevant experience. Governors are knowledgeable about the changes that have taken place in the school. They challenge and support you and other leaders to continue to improve. You are aware that the pace of change has been rapid since you took up your post as headteacher. You are now focused on embedding the changes that you have made, particularly in relation to the curriculum.

You invite external support and scrutiny as part of your determination to continue to develop the quality of education that pupils receive. You are making effective use of external advisers to support you, particularly around improving the quality of the curriculum. You and senior leaders engage well with this external scrutiny to help you to quality assure the changes that you have made. You have ensured that staff have access to a wide range of training, as well as to local networks of support, so that they can continue to develop their practice.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees for your academy sponsor, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Sally Rix  
**His Majesty's Inspector**