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Holly Rigby
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Dear Mrs Rigby

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of The Telford Park School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 29 June 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 have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in May 2022.

During the inspection, Sue Morris-King, His Majesty's Inspector, and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the chair of the education advisory board (EAB) and the chair of the trust the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and staff and scrutinised a range of documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

The Telford Park 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 previous monitoring inspection, a new member of staff has been appointed to undertake safeguarding and pastoral responsibilities. You are also in the process of recruiting an additional assistant headteacher, who will have a focus on engaging pupils

who struggle with their behaviour. Several pupils have joined the school roll, including a number of pupils in Year 10.

During this inspection, we focused our activities on the work of school and trust leaders to improve behaviour and attitudes, as well as the school's continued work around safeguarding.

You and your staff have continued to make safeguarding a high priority. All new staff appointed since the previous inspection have undergone appropriate checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. You have strengthened your safeguarding team by providing all heads of year with designated safeguarding lead training to help support your work with vulnerable pupils. Staff have also received further training on the code of conduct, dealing with racist incidents and online safety. Leaders have ensured that they record all safeguarding incidents on the school's online system. This includes referrals made to external agencies. However, on occasion, records of support for vulnerable pupils do not include all actions that the school has taken and the timeline of when this has taken place. Leaders recognise that this aspect of their work needs to improve.

Since the previous inspection, you and your team have made some well-thought-out and sensible changes to the structure of the school day. You have changed the place of tutor time, and changes have been made to the way in which break and lunchtimes are organised. These changes are having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff have welcomed having tutor time at the start of the day. Some pupils told us that this makes them feel more settled and helps their day to get off to a smooth start. During break and lunchtimes, inspectors observed pupils behaving in a calmer and more orderly way than at the time of the previous monitoring inspection.

You have recently changed the behaviour policy, with the aim of making classrooms more focused on learning. Pupils who do not settle to their work or who interrupt the learning of others are now removed more swiftly to another part of the school for a short while. Most pupils and staff we spoke to during the inspection were positive about these changes. Pupils told us that this is helping them to get on with their learning more easily. This change is at the early stage of implementation, and leaders are aware of the need to keep its impact under close review.

In the lessons visited during the inspection, behaviour was generally positive. However, there were occasions where pupils were less focused and off task. In discussion with several pupils, they told us that there remains a significant minority of pupils who continue to disrupt learning and that behaviour between their lessons can vary. Additionally, leaders recognise there is further work to do to help pupils actively engage more in their learning.

You have worked carefully with pupils to ensure that they know the importance of treating each other with respect and respecting individual differences. This is clearly having a positive impact. Most of the pupils we spoke to feel that this aspect of their experience of

school is now better than it has been. However, a few pupils did state that they are not confident that when they raise concerns these will be dealt with.

The number of pupils suspended from school remains high and has risen since the previous monitoring inspection. The firm line you have taken around internal truancy resulted in suspensions rising for a while, but these are now coming down. Most pupils who have been suspended for this reason have responded well and no longer play truant. Leaders recognise that, for some pupils, attending lessons consistently can be a challenge. For these pupils, you have put in place a range of support, which is beginning to have a positive impact. During the inspection, there were no unsupervised pupils out of lessons, and most pupils moved quickly to their next lesson at changeover time. For some pupils, suspension appears to have an impact, as the behaviour is not repeated. Others, however, are suspended repeatedly. Leaders are aware of the need to continue to find appropriate alternatives for those pupils who are repeatedly suspended.

The overall attendance for the school for this academic year to date is just below 90%. Around a third of the school is persistently absent, that is, they have an average attendance below 90%. Of these, a small number attend for less than 50% of the time. Leaders know the situations of each of these pupils and have a range of strategies in place to support and challenge these pupils and their families to improve each pupil's attendance. In many cases, these strategies are having a positive impact.

Leaders are rightly ambitious for all pupils to attend well. You and your senior team have recently designed a new way in which to communicate your expectations to pupils and to ensure that they properly understand the importance of attending regularly. Crucially, leaders are talking to pupils about the way in which missing days of school equates to missing opportunities to achieve and succeed. Tutors are talking to pupils about their attendance on a weekly basis and helping pupils to plan their own strategies to improve. This strategy is in the early stages of implementation, but already some pupils are feeling better informed about the importance of attendance. Pupils we spoke to during the inspection about this work felt that it was helpful and liked the conversations they were having with their tutors.

The EAB has continued to meet regularly to provide challenge and support to school leaders. They routinely evaluate the school's action plan, as well as undertaking verification activities to check and test out what they are being told. The trust has supported the school with introducing a new behaviour policy, and trustees scrutinise the data that has arisen from this, including the increase in the number of suspensions. Trust leaders recognise that there is further work to do to ensure that the behaviour policy is consistently embedded across the school.

You continue to work with various partners outside of the trust to help support your journey of improvement. The school continues to be part of the Department for Education's Behaviour Hub, and you have valued support in this area. The local authority has also conducted visits to the school to check on the school's work in relation to

safeguarding. Leaders have worked closely with external consultants to look at ways to develop and improve the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Community Academies Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Telford & Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes
His Majesty's Inspector