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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Vanetta Spence
Headteacher
Montpelier High School
Cheltenham Road
Bristol
BS6 5RD

Dear Ms Spence

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Montpelier High School.

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 20 September 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 March 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer and the director of secondary education from 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 evaluated the impact of the school's work to date, scrutinised documents and met with groups of pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as having serious weaknesses.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Since the monitoring inspection in December 2022, a new headteacher has been appointed. The senior leadership team now includes four associate headteachers. In addition, the pastoral team has been expanded to include non-teaching heads of year.

The school has taken action to address the areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection. For example, there are robust safeguarding procedures in place to protect the physical and emotional well-being of pupils. The school works closely with external agencies, including the local authority's safeguarding team, to ensure that pupils at risk of harm receive effective support. The school is vigilant about the risks that pupils may face. Through regular scrutiny of safeguarding concerns, the school ensures that all information pertaining to vulnerable pupils is recorded and shared effectively. For example, the attendance officer, the special educational needs coordinator, the safeguarding leader and heads of year meet frequently to evaluate the information they have about pupils and decide on appropriate actions.

Pupils of all year groups report significant improvements in the relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils have a trusted adult with whom they can share their worries. Many pupils state that they have strong relationships with staff and feel supported and protected.

Pupils define bullying accurately and have increased confidence that bullying issues are resolved effectively. The school has improved its overview of behaviour and bullying incidents, both of which have decreased significantly. The school uses this information to identify emerging issues and to develop appropriate strategies to respond to these.

The school has established a clear vision of success for all pupils. The mission is to create a school that is a sanctuary for pupils and a place where they can develop a strong sense of belonging. This is tangible in school improvement priorities. Consequently, the quality of welfare is prioritised along with the quality of education. However, despite the school having revised the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, many pupils do not yet feel that they are well prepared for the world beyond school. Some pupils feel that they do not receive a breadth of information and clear guidance about future careers and further education. However, sixth-form students study a very effective PSHE curriculum. Sixth-form students also receive detailed and informative guidance about careers, apprenticeships and higher education.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
His Majesty's Inspector