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Mr Alex Jeffrey
Headteacher
Co-Op Academy Grange
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Dear Mr Jeffrey

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Co-op Academy Grange

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 28 November 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 November 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, the executive headteacher and the regional director from the trust, the actions that you have taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I met with leaders responsible for behaviour, attendance and curriculum development, conducted a behaviour walk and spoke with pupils and staff. I have considered evidence from all these activities when 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 previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes across the school. The senior leadership team has increased in size and most of these leaders are

new in post. There are several staff from the trust who are now regularly based in school. The school has restructured the pastoral team, making a range of additional appointments including non-teaching heads of year and a community engagement officer. The trust has also introduced a new Academy Intervention Board to support the school. While leaders have made a range of changes across school, my visit focused on behaviour and attendance systems.

The school has taken decisive action to improve behaviour. Leaders have reviewed the behaviour policy and provided a range of training for staff to ensure they are applying this consistently. Pupils broadly agree that this is now the case. Behaviour in lessons is improving. When behaviour in lessons is not good enough, there are a high number of non-teaching staff available to support teachers to reduce the disruption to lessons. Pupils are still regularly removed from lessons, however, this number is decreasing.

Staff report that behaviour on corridors continues to be more variable. Leaders have introduced clear systems to tackle this. There is a high staff presence during transition times between lessons. The behaviour I observed at these times was broadly calm and orderly. There are also robust systems in place to tackle internal truancy. Leaders now track and monitor this carefully.

The school have creatively considered how to best support pupils whose behaviour is more challenging. There is now a range of targeted interventions and support provided in school to help re-engage these pupils. Suspensions are reducing. However, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils continue to be overrepresented in these figures. The school has established an on-site alternative provision to support the most vulnerable pupils.

Improving attendance has been a key focus for the school. Leaders have restructured and added capacity to the attendance team. A key priority has been to identify and tackle the root causes for poor attendance. The school has employed a community engagement officer to help engage families with school. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced. These new systems are in their infancy. Attendance continues to be a priority for the school.

Some pupils are still having a mixed experience in school. Most feel that behaviour is improving and that they have a trusted adult in school. They value the role of Head of Year. Pupils report that bullying does happen in school. They would feel confident to report it and that staff would act. Most pupils feel that bullying is tackled effectively. Some disagree. Pupils also report that racist comments do happen in school, however some pupils would be less likely to report this kind of language. However, pupils agree that, when they report it, staff take racism much more seriously than before.

The school has also prioritised improvements to the quality of pupils' education. School and trust leaders have supported middle leaders to carefully consider curriculum thinking across subject areas. Leaders have mapped out the knowledge that pupils will learn, with consideration to important vocabulary and reading strategies. The school has also

reviewed their monitoring processes to check how well staff are delivering the curriculum in classrooms. This now informs personalised professional development opportunities. Staff find these new processes supportive and helpful.

The CEO, wider trust leaders and the Academy Intervention Board are all actively involved with the school's progress. They regularly attend school and check on the impact of new systems. They support you in identifying priorities and evaluating progress. The Academy Development Plan forms the basis of this dialogue. This document is precise and well-focused to encourage measurable impact. Some trust leaders have been based in school to ensure that systems are running effectively. Staff feel that you, and the wider leadership team, are approachable and willing to listen.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the Co-operative Academies trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Katie Spurr
His Majesty's Inspector