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Dear Ms Chandler

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of South Wigston High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 21 and 22 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 December 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, Richard Vasey, Kathryn Hardy, Stephen Long, Ofsted Inspectors (OI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, trustees and governors 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 carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils, looked at samples of pupils' work, looked at documents related to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and the school's curriculum, met with a range of staff, observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke with a sample of alternative providers used by the school. 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

Following the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership team. You were appointed as principal in January 2023. Also, a vice-principal and three assistant principals were appointed and started in January 2023. You have appointed additional staff to the attendance and pastoral team. You have also appointed additional teachers to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

During the inspection, we focused on the areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection. These related to how well pupils learn the planned curriculum, how well teachers question and check pupils' understanding, how teachers adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEND, how staff challenge poor behaviour, the attendance and punctuality of pupils, how pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain and how the school communicates with stakeholders. The school improvement plan identifies what needs to improve and the actions required to address each of these areas. The evidence collected during the inspection shows that you, the senior leadership team and the trust have taken effective actions to improve the school.

The implementation of the curriculum is improving. Curriculum leaders in some subjects have redesigned the curriculum to support teachers to deliver the curriculum well. Lessons start with a 'do now' activity to recap previous learning. However, staff do not always use this strategy well to support pupils to know and remember more of the planned curriculum. How teachers question pupils has improved. Most teachers use effective questions to check pupils' understanding. However, it is not always clear from the work that pupils produce how staff address gaps in learning and misconceptions. Some teachers explain new information clearly. However, some teachers do not always explain this in a way that supports pupils to learn the curriculum. Sometimes, teachers give too much information and pupils get confused.

You have prioritised reading. Pupils have a guided reading session every day. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have a weekly reading lesson. This helps to develop pupils' comprehension skills. You have trained staff to support pupils at the early stages of reading. This means that these pupils will soon be getting the support they need.

The provision for pupils with SEND is beginning to improve. Leaders have ensured that teachers get the information they need to support these pupils. However, teachers do not always use this information well. Teachers do not always adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEND. This means that these pupils do not always produce high-quality work, as they do not learn the intended curriculum well. You are aware that this is an area that needs further work. You are working with other trust leaders to ensure that staff receive training in how to meet the needs of these pupils.

You have ensured that pupils are clear about how they should behave. There is a clear system in place for dealing with any behaviour issues. Most staff use this system well. Staff are positive about the improvements in behaviour. Disruption to learning in lessons

has significantly reduced. Most lessons visited by inspectors were calm and orderly. Most pupils behave well at unstructured times. Pupils spoken to said that they feel safe in school. Most pupils say that behaviour has improved but some lessons are still disrupted by poor behaviour.

There is a clear system for dealing with lateness to school. This is having a positive impact. The number of pupils who are late to school has reduced. You have increased capacity in the attendance team. Furthermore, the school gets support from an attendance and welfare team employed by the trust. You are aware of the barriers that some pupils have to regular attendance. Staff are working with these pupils and their families. You have begun to work with an attendance hub to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. However, the impact of this work is not yet evident.

Leaders have planned for what they want pupils to learn in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. This means that it is clear what pupils should learn and when. Pupils in Years 7 to 10 have a PSHE lesson every week. This is now delivered by the same group of staff. This is helping to ensure that staff deliver the PSHE curriculum consistently well. Pupils are beginning to remember what they have learned. For example, pupils could recall what they have learned about healthy relationships, online safety and other faiths and cultures. However, pupils do not have a secure understanding of fundamental British values.

Leaders' engagement with stakeholders has improved. Staff work more closely with parents to ensure that they understand behaviour and attendance expectations. There is now a parents' 'drop-in' session every other Monday afternoon, where parents can discuss any issues they may have. This is helping to engage parents with the work the school is doing. Staff spoken to by inspectors said they feel well supported by leaders. Staff have regular professional development, focused on what they need to improve on.

Trust leaders have provided extra support for the school. An associate principal from the trust works with the school. The trust has provided extra support for safeguarding. Furthermore, the trust lead for SEND is working with school leaders to improve the provision for pupils with SEND. The trust has also ensured that there is robust oversight of how the school is progressing in the areas needing improvement identified at the previous inspection. This is done through the 'post-Ofsted action plan group,' which meets every two weeks. This has ensured that the school remains focused on the areas that need improving. Those responsible for governance challenge and support leaders well.

The school is making use of external support through the Midlands Knowledge Hub and the behaviour and attendance hubs. You have used the support from the behaviour hub well to improve behaviour. Your work with the attendance hub is at an early stage. You have also commissioned external reviews to support school improvement. You have used these reviews well to check that you are making progress against the areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Learning without Limits Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Halcro
His Majesty's Inspector