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Dear Mr Taylor

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Buttershaw Business & Enterprise College Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 31 January 2024, 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 February 2023.

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 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. I also spoke with groups of pupils, scrutinised behaviour and attendance records, considered the school's work to safeguard pupils and observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons. 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 last inspection, there have been a significant number of changes to the school's staff, including at senior and middle leadership levels. You have appointed new leaders with responsibility for behaviour and for the oversight of the school's use of alternative provision. Alongside trust leaders, you have added additional capacity to the pastoral teams that oversee behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Your actions since the last inspection have focused on ensuring that the behaviour of pupils improves, creating more focused learning environments. The school has a new, clearer behaviour policy that pupils understand. Staff have placed additional focus on teaching pupils how to behave. There are some early signs that for most pupils, this is working well and that disruption in lessons is reducing. Despite this, the number of pupils receiving a suspension for poor behaviour remains too high and for some groups of pupils, has increased. You are aware that this continues to be a priority for the school.

The attendance of pupils remains stubbornly below the school's expectations. Although there are some improvements, particularly with fewer pupils being persistently absent, too many pupils miss school regularly. This, as with suspensions, too often impacts the most vulnerable pupils more than their peers. These pupils are missing the benefit of the changes you are making in school.

You have acted quickly to review how the school uses alternative provisions. New leaders have brought increased rigour to the school's systems. These new systems provide assurances that pupils accessing alternative provision are effectively safeguarded. The school also has greater oversight of what pupils are learning in these provisions. A significant number of pupils at the school access part of their education at alternative provisions. This includes a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. You recognise the need to keep these placements under review and to ensure that pupils successfully reintegrate into the school at the end of their placement.

The school has a large and well-trained safeguarding team. The trust provides additional support and expertise. School leaders know pupils well. They maintain detailed records of concerns that are raised about a pupil's welfare. These are acted on swiftly and effectively. Pastoral team meetings are used to ensure that all required actions are completed. Leaders work well with external agencies, such as counselling services, to support pupils. The school's personal, social and health education lessons are used to teach pupils how to keep safe from potential risks, including county lines.

Alongside the trust, you have identified a number of external partners to support aspects of your work to improve the school. You have engaged with other multi-academy trusts to develop the curriculum, as well as joined Department for Education funded projects to improve behaviour and attendance. These align with your vision to secure lasting and sustained improvements across the school.

Governors and trustees have supported your work, for example by ensuring that there is greater capacity provided by the trust's central team. The regular support of the CEO and director of secondary education provides additional oversight and challenge. You know that following a period of transition, there is work to do to ensure that recent initiatives become embedded and lead to sustained improvements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Bradford Diocesan 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

Thomas Wraith
His Majesty's Inspector