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Benjamin Myers
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Dear Mr Myers

Special measures monitoring inspection of Beis Yaakov High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 20 and 21 February 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in September 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, Fiona Burke-Jackson, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, the chair of the trust board and representatives from the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection and the first monitoring inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also carried out visits to lessons, conducted meetings with a range of other staff, spoke to a selection of pupils in all year groups and scrutinised pupils' work. We reviewed a range of school documentation, including leaders' improvement plans, safeguarding records and the programme to support pupils' personal development. 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 requiring special measures.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

The senior leadership team has been restructured since the last monitoring inspection. The two previous deputy headteachers have now been appointed as joint headteachers. One of the headteachers is also the executive head of the trust.

The school responded positively to the findings from the first monitoring inspection in June 2023. It has acted decisively and with greater speed to bring about improvement. This action is beginning to strengthen the quality of education on offer. For example, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), now learn a broader range of national curriculum subjects than they did before. For instance, pupils in Years 7 and 8 are taught music, and all pupils across key stage 3 now access geography. This is helping to ensure that pupils learn all that they should during their time in school.

In each subject area, in all year groups, the curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it is clear what pupils should learn and the order in which they will learn it. Pupils are more able to build on their prior learning. Despite these improvements, a limited amount of time is given to pupils' learning in the different subjects that they study. At times, this hinders pupils from gaining a secure understanding of key topics and concepts.

The school has ensured that staff can regularly engage with external support and training from subject-specific experts, as well as internal training related to teaching and learning. Increasingly, this enhanced level of training is helping teachers to deliver the curriculum more effectively. For instance, the school has introduced new assessment strategies, which teachers are beginning to use to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. Staff have also had further training to help them adapt their delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. However, some staff do not use these new strategies consistently well in all subjects.

The school has continued to develop strategies to improve pupils' reading knowledge. Some of these approaches are more developed than others. For example, gaps in pupils' reading knowledge are identified as soon as they join the school. However, the targeted support that these pupils need to help them overcome their barriers to reading is not readily available or effective. Pupils in key stage 3 now benefit from greater time to read for pleasure in their English lessons. This positive change is encouraging younger pupils to read more widely and often. However, this is not replicated for pupils in key stage 4.

The school has revised and updated its development plans. They are comprehensive and clearly outline appropriate actions to address the most pressing areas of weakness. The plans are evaluated regularly to check that the actions are having the desired impact. The school has focused on upskilling staff by, for example, accessing professional qualifications so that they can contribute to school improvement planning in specific areas. This is starting to develop the capacity of leadership in the school.

The provision to support pupils' personal development has improved. For example, the school now provides regular small-group personal development sessions, with specialist staff, for all pupils. This is beginning to ensure that pupils receive the information that they need for their future lives. For instance, pupils learn about matters related to their personal safety, their social skills and their physical and mental health. Furthermore, the school has outlined more explicitly how it will meet its statutory obligation to deliver relationships and sex education and health education. Through its work with an external provider, the school has set out a clear curriculum for the teaching of sex education for those pupils who have not been withdrawn from it. However, the school does not teach pupils about all of the differences that exist among people in modern British society. This limits how well prepared pupils are for life in modern Britain.

The systems to promote pupils' positive behaviour have strengthened further since the first monitoring inspection. Pupils, staff, parents and carers understand the procedures for securing good behaviour and regular attendance. Staff ensure that rewards and sanctions are issued with greater consistency than was the case in the past. In addition, the increased level of pastoral support is leading to a calm, productive school environment. There is a steady reduction of low-level behaviour incidents in classrooms, and pupils' rates of attendance have improved considerably.

Trustees have taken steps to strengthen their own expertise. For example, they have embraced external support, and they have visited other governing body meetings to learn from best practice. Trustees have a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are also better informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is because they receive more pertinent information from the school. They are becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account.

Staff feel valued and well supported. They are positive about recent improvements and how these have been introduced with consideration for their workload and well-being.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Downing
His Majesty's Inspector