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Nicola Crehan
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Dear Mrs Crehan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Tudor Grange Academy Kingshurst

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 10 and 11 April 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 require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in January 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, Tim Hill, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the executive principal, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, other staff, a member of the trust board and the chair of the local governing body 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 visited lessons, spoke with staff and pupils and scrutinised a range of documents. 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 am of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The school should take further action to:

- reduce absence and persistent absence by identifying and addressing the specific barriers for those who are not attending school regularly.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last inspection, there have been some considerable staffing changes. Several teachers have left the school and some legacy vacancies remain unfilled. The school has struggled to recruit staff and there remain a number of posts in various subjects that the school needs to fill. To alleviate some of this staffing pressure, several senior leaders have increased their teaching commitment to fill gaps in the timetable. The school has also introduced 'lead learning' sessions to bring groups together and to remove the need for lessons to be delivered by supply teachers.

The school has extended the senior leadership team to help increase capacity. There have been additional associate college leaders appointed, with responsibility for behaviour and culture, transition and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and data and timetabling. A new associate principal was appointed in January 2024, with overarching responsibility for culture, ethos and attendance.

Leaders have made a positive start on their journey of improvement for the school. They have wasted no time in tackling some of the significant weaknesses that were identified previously. They have begun to address areas for improvement, prioritising appropriately. While there is still much to do, leaders are on the right path in helping the school to move forward.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve pupils' behaviour. A new behaviour approach, 'The Right Way', was introduced in February 2023, which simplified the previous version into three key values: ready, respectful and responsible. This new approach was launched with all stakeholders so that everyone had a clear sense of how to contribute to the school's new culture and ethos. Staff have received internal training on this new approach, which has led to more consistency in how behaviour is managed and dealt with across the school. In addition to this, the new behaviour policy was launched to pupils through assemblies and tutor time activities. However, leaders recognise there is still more work to do. At present, the number of pupils who are permanently excluded, suspended or internally isolated remains high. There are also a high number of detentions being issued for persistent disruptive behaviour and lateness to lessons. This, in part, is because of the instability in staffing.

The school has made a positive start to addressing issues of bullying. Leaders recognise that, previously, there were inconsistencies in how staff were logging incidents and that pupils were not always clear on how to report bullying. Alongside this, there are ongoing perceptions among pupils that reporting bullying is seen as 'snitching'. Leaders have made sure, through assemblies and form times, that pupils have a better understanding of bullying. They have also provided training to staff so that they are aware of how to deal

with and report incidents of bullying, should they arise. Leaders have also sought the views of pupils and have used this information to inform future actions. While some progress has been made in this area, there remains more to do. Pupils told inspectors that they are now aware of how to report bullying. However, not all pupils have confidence in staff to deal with this. Some believe that reporting it could make the situation worse.

Despite leaders' well-intended actions, pupils' attendance remains stubbornly low and is not rising quickly enough. The rate of persistent absence and the proportion of pupils who are severely absent (missing more than 50% of school sessions) are notably high. This is especially the case for pupils with SEND. While the school has appropriate procedures in place to manage instances of absence, the school's actions have not gone far enough to identify and tackle the root causes for individual pupils. That said, more resources are now being invested to address this significant concern, and the school has started to give more attention to this area.

Leaders have started to make improvements to how lessons are delivered in the classroom. A common lesson structure has been introduced to ensure that there is greater consistency across the school in how lessons are taught. Alongside this, leaders have put in place appropriate quality assurance mechanisms to check how this is working in each subject. However, there remains significant variability in how the curriculum is implemented in the classroom. Teachers are not routinely checking understanding and swiftly addressing misconceptions or errors when they occur. In addition, lesson tasks are not consistently focused on what pupils should be learning through the curriculum and how this builds on what they already know. Instability in staffing is also exacerbating this issue. All these factors combined continue to hinder pupils' progress.

The school has made reading a top priority. Leaders have quickly recognised the need to focus on this area and to create a culture of reading throughout. As part of this, leaders have introduced a morning reading session for all year groups so that they can read diverse and wide-ranging texts based on their reading ability. Pupils are tested regularly to identify where gaps in knowledge may exist. For weaker readers in Year 7, a programme of support has been put in place to help support their development of phonics. Early indications show that these pupils are making progress with their reading. However, some are hindered by poor attendance.

The school's efforts to raise the profile of SEND have paid off. Leaders have prioritised this work and implemented several changes to strengthen this area. All pupils with learning plans are allocated an advocate to champion their needs. Teaching assistants have benefited from bespoke training to increase their skills so they can be more effective in supporting pupils. Alongside this, the school has increased its engagement with parents and carers. All staff are now more aware of the specific needs of pupils and there is growing consistency in the way staff use pupils' SEND information to adapt classroom tasks effectively. However, there remains variability across the school in how pupils with SEND are supported. Consequently, these pupils with SEND continue to underachieve.

Trust leaders are providing effective support to the school. Members of the trust's central team have been deployed to help the school with its work around areas including safeguarding, the quality of education and SEND. The principal has continued to be supported by an executive principal. Trustees have a secure understanding of the school's current position. They continue to check on the work of the school through 'health checks' and regular visits.

The school has received various external visits to quality assure its work. A personal, social, health and economic review and a SEND review took place in February and September 2023 respectively. As well as this, there have been external reviews in attendance and safeguarding. The school has also received training delivered by external specialists to support with behaviour management.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes
His Majesty's Inspector