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Mark Robinson  
Principal  
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Dear Dr Robinson

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Outwood Academy Normanby**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 7 November 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 2024.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, 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, other senior and trust leaders and a trustee and governor 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 reviewed documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and personal development. In addition, I met formally and informally with groups of students. Unaccompanied behaviour walks, including visits to lessons and social time, also took place. 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 no longer be judged as having serious weaknesses.**

## **The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

Since the last inspection, a vice-principal for inclusion has been appointed.

During this visit, we focused on the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils were the most significant concern. Therefore, inspection activities relating to these areas took priority. In addition, I also considered the personal development programme, with a focus on the provision for enrichment and cultural experiences. This was also highlighted as an area for development by the previous inspection team.

Leaders have high expectations for the quality of the curriculum. Through the behaviour and attitudes focus, we also discussed aspects of the curriculum. Significant investment from the trust supports an effective reading curriculum. You have quickly identified the high number of pupils who need reading support in the school. These pupils receive effective and timely help. Staff are well trained in your reading programmes. You are checking the ongoing impact of this work. Initial signs are positive. Furthermore, you have noted improvements in pupils' general attainment. As pupils spend less time out of lessons, they are beginning to learn more over time.

There are encouraging signs that behaviour in the school is improving through an effective improvement strategy. You have instigated a highly focused approach with clear, measurable outcomes. Staff know what they must do as there is clarity to your systems and expectations. Truancy from lessons has declined notably. Fewer suspensions are taking place than before. The use of positive praise has increased. Reductions in behaviour incidents are also clear for the most vulnerable pupils. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You recognise that the number of behaviour incidents is still too high. Pupils' behaviour around the school can still cause disruption to others. Pupils still hold some negative views about their school. At this stage, a consistently positive culture throughout the school has not been securely established.

The low attendance rates of pupils have stabilised since the last inspection. You are taking action to improve attendance. You have increased the capacity of your attendance team. Case studies show you are helping individual pupils improve their attendance. Focused projects for pupils with persistent absence show evidence of success. At this stage, your efforts have not affected absence rates as much as you would like. However, the foundations for future improvement are strong. You understand the barriers to positive attendance. Pupils with SEND, whose absence is higher than their peers, are a continued focus of your work.

You have developed your personal development programme well. This includes the provision of a much broader range of experiences for pupils. Subject leaders have introduced a range of cultural enrichment visits. Leaders have a more coherent approach to the celebration of cultural events. This includes the school's assembly plan and other

calendared events. This development work is at an early stage. Pupils do not consistently recognise or appreciate the opportunities you provide. The link between your work to enhance pupils' personal development and their behaviour and attitudes is not fully developed. Gaps remain in the depth of pupils' learning about the fundamental British values.

There is significant leadership capacity in place to help the school improve. The trust's chief executive officer has a well-developed vision for the future. Trustees and members of the local academy council are similarly focused. Executive trust leaders provide effective support. They help you strive for long-term, sustainable improvement. This includes investing in permanent staff employed directly at the school. For example, a new vice-principal for inclusion has been appointed. Members of the local academy council are active in their roles. They are instrumental in shaping and monitoring your improvement plans. They are also helping to develop careers education. They do this by sourcing a wide and varied employer network to support pupils' next steps. All leaders focus on the well-being of staff. Trust-wide surveys and staff retention figures show staff are happy in their work. You and your team are evaluating the impact of the changes that are being made. This ensures that new tasks do not add unnecessarily to staff's workload.

Arrangements for safeguarding in the school are effective. As behaviour improves, pupils are increasingly safe and secure. Staff responsible for safer recruitment are knowledgeable and skilled. Staff across the school understand their responsibilities well. Trustees and governors ensure safeguarding is at the centre of everyone's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Hannah Millett  
**His Majesty's Inspector**