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6 December 2024

David Waugh
Principal
Great Academy Ashton
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Dear Mr Waugh

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Great Academy Ashton

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 13 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 took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

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 and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, other staff, trustees, governors and the local authority 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 carried out visits to lessons, met with other staff, spoke to pupils and carried out work scrutiny. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

The school should take further action to:

- Further improve the consistency with which pupils' misconceptions are identified and addressed.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, the school has restructured and expanded its senior leadership team. It has also strengthened its middle leadership capacity. In addition, there have been changes to the local governing body. These changes have helped the school focus on securing the improvements identified at the previous inspection.

The findings from the previous inspection have been accepted by the school, the trust and those responsible for governance. All involved with the school are unified in their wish to bring about positive and sustained change. This has supported the school to take action to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. There is an appropriate sense of urgency to the changes that the school is making. The foundations for further improvement are securely in place. The school, the trust and those responsible for governance appreciate the pace of change needed to raise outcomes for all pupils.

The school, together with colleagues from the trust, have worked to enhance the curriculum and ensure that it is broad and ambitious. It has outlined the key knowledge pupils need to learn. The school has identified the incremental actions needed to ensure pupils make progress through the curriculum. Systems are in place to monitor pupils' understanding. However, these are not always applied consistently well. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions are not addressed quickly enough. More work needs to be done to ensure that gaps in pupils' understanding are identified and addressed promptly.

The school continues to prioritise reading. Since the previous inspection, considerable progress has been made in supporting pupils who find reading difficult. The school uses assessment information successfully to identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and to provide effective, targeted support. This approach helps pupils to build fluency and confidence in their reading. Additionally, pupils who are at the early stages of reading, including in key stage 4, now receive the necessary support to read with greater confidence.

The school has made significant progress in improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. It has raised expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils and staff feel that behaviour has improved. Lesson visits demonstrate that low-level disruption is uncommon. The implementation of a one-way system has made corridors and staircases calmer and safer. Most pupils have recognised the impact of the 'morning mood' session, which helps to set a positive tone for the day. Pupils understand the school's expectations of them and think that these are fair. Staff and pupils appreciate the greater consistency with which the behaviour policy is applied. The behaviour systems are monitored carefully. The school makes appropriate use of the information it collects about behaviour incidents to target support where it is needed.

The school has engaged effectively with external support. This includes support from a local secondary school and from the Department for Education's behaviour hub

programme. The school has welcomed this support. It is helping the school assess the impact of the work it has already carried out and identify additional areas for improvement. The school values the opportunities for professional development with colleagues and hub partners.

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

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Sharples
His Majesty's Inspector