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Mr Graham Horn
Principal
Neale-Wade Academy
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Cambridgeshire
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Dear Mr Horn

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Neale-Wade Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 8 January 2025, 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, other senior leaders, staff, the chair of the Active Learning Trust, its chief executive officer (CEO) and other trust leaders 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 visited lessons, scrutinised the work in pupils' books, and spoke with pupils and leaders to evaluate your work to improve the quality of education. I met with safeguarding leaders and checked the single central record. I met with leaders and pupils to evaluate other areas where weaknesses had been identified, particularly regarding behaviour. I scrutinised a range of school and trust documents, such as the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan. 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:

- adapt learning effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Sometimes, this does not happen and when this is the case it results in pupils with SEND learning less well than they should. The school needs to ensure staff know how to adapt learning for pupils with SEND so that pupils confidently understand new content and successfully build up what they know.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you have improved provision. A key aspect of this has been staffing. This is now more settled. Consequently, pupils experience far fewer substitute teachers than they used to. This helps them develop greater confidence in their education.

You have developed the school's curriculum. There is now a clarity about what pupils should learn and when, including in the sixth form. This enables staff to teach the curriculum better. You have established a well-considered set of teaching approaches. Teachers use these consistently. This means pupils have a more coherent experience of learning. Teachers use appropriate activities to help pupils understand the intended learning. For example, teachers regularly recap recent content. This helps pupils to remember the most important knowledge and build on it.

Teachers check routinely for misconceptions. They ensure that in most cases pupils do not move on to new learning without the required prior knowledge. For instance, mathematics teachers check that pupils are secure in division before moving on to algebra. In English, pupils get the help they need with the foundations of reading and writing. However, because of the previously weaker curriculum, gaps in pupils' knowledge remain. Some pupils with SEND have large gaps. Sometimes, the school is not effective at adapting learning so that these pupils can understand it. This means pupils with SEND at times struggle more than they should have to.

Mostly, pupils have begun to learn more successfully than at the time of the previous inspection. They often apply their knowledge well in tasks, such as using similes in extended writing in English. While this is the case, there is not yet sufficient depth of learning. Pupils have not developed the connected web of knowledge they need, such as to demonstrate their knowledge in rich discussion.

The trust has supported you and school leaders well. It has an accurate view of the quality of provision. The trust has provided capacity where needed for the school to improve. For example, it has added extra leadership so that the school has the required expertise to refine the curriculum. The oversight of the areas the school needs to improve is regular and focused. You and trust leaders have introduced change in a well-planned and measured manner. This has helped staff to buy into it. The trust has put in place effective training to help staff implement improvements. As a result, the school has begun to provide pupils with a more positive experience of education. An example of this is that

pupils receive more cohesive careers guidance. They are now able to make informed choices about their next steps. Many pupils who say they would not have recommended the school at the time of the previous inspection, now do so. That said, there are still quite a few who do not yet engage fully with the school's aims.

You have improved the culture of the school. Leaders have raised expectations for behaviour. You have reviewed the behaviour policy and put in place one that is simpler and more effective. Staff apply this with more consistency. Pupils now know where they stand. As a result, behaviour is more orderly. Breaktimes are calmer. There are now fewer examples of inappropriate language than at the time of the previous inspection. This has helped learning in the classroom, as there is less disruption. However, these changes are new. There is still some variability. Some pupils who receive sanctions then repeat their poor choices. There is more to do to address the underlying causes of misbehaviour, so pupils learn to conduct themselves well without regular sanctions.

Attendance has got better. Fewer pupils have high levels of absence. You have ensured that attendance is seen as the responsibility of the whole school. For instance, pupils learn about the importance of positive attendance. As a result, they miss out on less of their education.

You work closely with agencies in the local area to make sure pupils get the help they need, such as to stay safe. This enables the pastoral team to support vulnerable pupils to engage well with school.

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

Yours sincerely

Charlie Fordham
His Majesty's Inspector