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Adam Dawson
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Dear Mr Dawson

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Cherry Tree Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 26 March 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 and other senior leaders, as well as the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust and members of the school's governing board 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 a sample of lessons, spoke with groups of pupils and considered the school's work to safeguard pupils. 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:

☐ identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding to ensure that they achieve better by the end of Year 6.

Main findings

Since the school's previous inspection, there has been significant change to its staffing. Most members of your leadership team are new to their post. This includes a new deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead. In addition, the school has appointed two new teachers in key stage 1. The school has also accessed support from another trust as it strives to make the improvements that are necessary.

The school has strengthened the approach used by teachers in lessons. It has provided staff with training in the 'Cherry Tree Academy way'. This has provided teachers with greater clarity about the school's expectations for how a lesson is taught. Some of these approaches are becoming established and reflected in improved experiences for pupils in lessons. However, there remains more to do to ensure that staff routinely check what pupils know and use this information to close gaps in pupils' knowledge consistently. When these gaps are not addressed, pupils do not make the progress through the curriculum that they are capable of. Some improvements are relatively recent and did not impact on pupils' achievement in 2024 national assessments, which remained low.

The trust has provided additional support to the school through the recent period of instability in staffing. Leaders, including those with responsibility for governance, know the school well. The trust has established more rigorous systems, such as regular 'team around the school' meetings, to scrutinise the impact of the changes being made. Although there remains more to do, these systems mean that leaders are better placed to identify the school's strengths and areas for development and to make further improvements.

The school continues to focus on improving pupils' attendance. There are some emerging signs that this is having an impact and that attendance is improving. However, attendance remains below national averages. You recognise the importance of sustaining and building on these gains so that pupils benefit from the improving quality of education and are better prepared for the next steps in their education.

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

Yours sincerely

Thomas Wraith
His Majesty's Inspector