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Mr Simon Sharples
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Dear Mr Sharples

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sandwich Technology School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 10 and 11 September 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 was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in May 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, Paul Grundy, Michelle Payne, Gavin Thomas, His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, trustees (referred to by the school as governors), and representatives from a supporting trust, 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 a large number of lessons across the school, met with some middle leaders, spoke to pupils, parents and other staff. We undertook scrutiny of your strategic action plans and evaluations of your work, both by yourselves and by external audits. 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 requiring special measures.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last monitoring visit, there have been some further changes to leadership roles. This includes the appointment of yourself as the substantive headteacher, an additional acting deputy headteacher and new responsibilities for others in the leadership team. The school's internal provision, The Sandwich Link, has also begun its work with pupils who need additional support to equate school with success. This is now fully staffed and has begun its much-needed work with pupils.

The improvements noted in behaviour during the last monitoring visit in April 2025 are now well embedded. The site is mostly calm and settled. Pupils feel safe in school and have faith that issues are dealt with more consistently. In-school truancy has now reduced further still, and is rare. 'Patrol staff', many of whom are senior leaders, are highly visible around the school site. This helps pupils to move purposefully to lessons. There is no longer disruption to lessons from pupils in the corridors. Pupils are now, in most areas of the school, calm and attentive during lessons. They work without disruption to their learning. While there are still a small number of areas of the school where this is less consistently the case, leaders have identified these areas and have plans to address this further.

The school's internal provision, The Sandwich Link, has now been established and the first wave of pupils have experienced this support. Here, pupils access appropriate curriculums and receive support to aid them in equating school with success. This includes support for additional learning needs, as well as social and emotional support. Pupils who have experienced this support report on this highly positively. There is encouraging evidence that shows this is already having a positive impact on pupils' attendance, well-being and focus.

Work to develop the quality of education has progressed at pace since the last monitoring visit. The school has established a 'Teaching and Learning Team' of staff to help raise the expectations of what happens in lessons. This group have identified the tenets of effective teaching and have begun to train all staff in the school's new expectations. This is starting to make a positive difference. For example, lessons now begin routinely with the 'Sandwich Start', which reminds pupils about links between current and previous learning. The recently introduced process for checking pupils' understanding, known as the 'Sandwich Check', is now beginning to be visible in most lessons. However, this work is still in its early stages. Leaders rightly recognise the need to monitor how effectively the information from these checks is used to adapt what is taught next. Leaders have established a tight programme of monitoring, which is providing them with an accurate picture of what is working effectively, and where more support is needed. The school

recognises that the quality of education needs further development before it is consistently effective enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified. However, there is variation in how well pupils with SEND are supported in lessons. In some areas of the school, pupils' needs are anticipated by staff who adapt learning to address them. However, 'pupil passports', intended to give clarity to staff about how best to support pupils' needs, are not consistently useful in the way they need to be. While some are effective and precise, others lack the specific information that supports staff in being able to address pupils' needs as well as they should.

Attendance remains an area that still requires significant action. While prioritising attendance through discussions at leadership level has led to some modest gains, there is much more work to do. Whereas in other areas of the school, strategic approaches are starting to bear fruit, this is not the case with attendance. There is not currently a sufficiently systematic process in place to identify and address pupils' barriers to attending school regularly. Consequently, attendance is not improving rapidly enough, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. The school understands that training is needed to quickly develop the expertise required to ensure that oversight of this aspect of the school's work is more impactful and attendance rapidly improves.

Opportunities to support the development of pupils' character have now been mapped carefully. These are designed to provide pupils with experiences to develop their social and emotional learning, including an understanding of healthy relationships. Leaders check the impact these have across the academic year.

Inspectors additionally considered the reading strategy in the school on this monitoring visit. Reading is being prioritised across the school. Reading for pleasure is being promoted through a range of initiatives, including reading during form time. Leaders now undertake more diagnostic checks when pupils join the school to identify the barriers to reading that pupils may have. A tiered approach has begun to ensure that pupils are directed to the right support to support their development of these essential skills. However, there is not yet effective enough support for those who are at the earliest stages of reading. Leaders recognise the need for a more systematic strategy to support these learners.

Safeguarding in the school is now effective. Pupils feel safe and know how to report worries. Staff are well trained and know where to refer concerns about pupils. Actions taken to safeguard pupils are appropriate and timely. This includes working with external agencies as needed.

Stakeholders in the school are confident about the significant changes made to the school's culture and pupil conduct. Parents reference the 'huge improvements', 'positive changes' and 'stronger school spirit' instilled by leaders. Similarly, pupils note the ways in which their day-to-day experience of school has changed markedly. Staff are motivated by improvements and feel empowered to do more. However, leaders recognise that there is

more to do. Leaders have continued to work collaboratively with their professional networks to further embed their plans. They have a clear vision for continued improvement and are taking stakeholders with them on this essential journey to improve things further for pupils in their school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees of the Sandwich Technology School trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Marian Feeley
His Majesty's Inspector