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29 January 2015

Mr Philip Loveday  
Headteacher  
Bridgnorth Endowed School  
Northgate  
Bridgnorth  
WV16 4ER

Dear Mr Loveday

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Bridgnorth Endowed School**

Following my visit to your academy on 28 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in October 2014.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I visited some lessons and I held meetings with you, a group of students, senior and middle leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. The academy's statement of intent and its action plans were evaluated.

#### **Context**

A new Chair of the Governing Body has recently been appointed. The academy is working closely with a number of schools. These are Hadley Learning Community; The Priory; Concord College; Ludlow School; Wolverhampton Grammar School; and Oldbury Wells School.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

You have used the recent inspection findings to refocus the work of the academy and to re-evaluate staff roles and procedures. You recognised that, until recently, your focus on the strategic management of the academy had not been sufficiently sharp. This was because time had been taken up in leading the mathematics department during a period when the academy was recruiting a suitable head of mathematics. You have included all the areas for improvement in your academy development plans and your statement of intent. The plans include the findings of the review of the pupil premium. Regular milestone checks are identified so that you and the governing body can be sure that the academy is on course to be removed from special measures within the required timescale. You have increased the challenge in your targets, particularly with regard to accelerating students' progress in English and mathematics.

In the past, senior leaders did not directly hold all subject leaders to account. You have sharpened the roles of the senior leadership team to ensure that middle leaders are held more tightly to account for promoting good teaching and accelerating the progress of students. The senior leaders' increased knowledge and understanding of their roles are reflected, for example, in the greater contributions they are making to checking on how effectively teachers are marking students' work. You recognise that your monitoring systems were not tight enough, and you are using the expertise in the schools you are working with to refine the academy's approach to monitoring. The new tracking system provides all staff with more accurate data on students' starting points. You expect teachers to use this information to improve their planning.

You recognise that, in the past, teachers' assessments were not always accurate and that action taken to tackle underachievement was too slow. You are more able to identify quickly teaching that is weak and students who are at risk of underperforming. Your monitoring is more rigorous because you have improved the accuracy of assessment information and checks are now more timely. You acknowledge that because of staffing turmoil in the past, some classes were over-reliant on supply teachers. You have reorganised the management of supply cover to minimise potential disruption to continuity of learning.

The leaders of English and mathematics stated that all early entry to GCSE examinations has ceased. This enables all students to have time to be fully prepared for the GCSE examinations and achieve their potential. Subject leaders said that the opportunities to look at the work of colleagues in other schools were helping them review their own practice and to identify ways to develop and better support their staff. They judge that staff have improved the accuracy of their assessments. This is

because of the impact of recently introduced regular standardisation and moderation meetings, and the greater attention paid to the examination reports from the awarding bodies. All staff are more rigorous in checking spelling, punctuation and grammar in students' work. Students stated that feedback from teachers was more detailed and helpful.

The newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body is committed to the academy and determined it should improve. He understands the urgency of ensuring that weaknesses are swiftly tackled. Governors have acted quickly on the findings of the external review of governance and reorganised the committee structure to hold you and your senior leaders to account more tightly. Governors' roles are now clearer and more closely aligned to the academy's priorities. The governing body recognises the importance of having an external view of the academy's work. It is currently appointing a consultant.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The academy's statement of intent is fit for purpose.

The academy's action plans are fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers without prior consultation with the monitoring HMI.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**