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29 January 2015

Stuart Tonks  
Headteacher  
Wilnecote High School  
Tinkers Green Road  
Wilnecote  
Tamworth  
B77 5LF

Dear Mr Tonks

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Wilnecote High 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 which 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 which took place on 17 September 2014.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three lead governors. The academy's statement of action, which includes its improvement plan, was evaluated, together with recent external reviews of governance, English and mathematics and recent minutes of governing body meetings.

#### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection which judged the academy to require special measures, there have been no changes to the academy's leadership team or

structure and no significant changes to staffing. The Chair of the Governing Body remains the same but the governing body has been restructured and a number of lead governors have been appointed from among the existing group of governors. A Department for Education review, which took place in November 2014, has not yet reported on what, if any, actions might be taken in terms of the status of the academy and hence its leadership.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders in the academy have taken action to bring about improvement. New systems have been put in place to monitor the quality of teaching and the progress students are making, although it is too early to establish their impact. External reviews of governance, the use of pupil premium funding, English and mathematics have recently been undertaken. Following on from the recommendations of the English and mathematics reviews, improvement plans are being developed and implemented, although it is too early to establish their impact. The report from the review of governance has only just been received and its recommendations are being considered by academy leaders and governors. The new lead governors are well informed and are beginning to challenge academy leaders more effectively; recent minutes of governing body meetings reflect this. The report of the review of pupil premium is awaited.

While a number of actions have been taken to tackle areas that need improvement, the academy is in urgent need of an independent review of leadership and management. A key issue for the academy is the fact that its current status as a stand-alone academy converter means there is no overarching authority above the governing body. This, together with a lack of response from the Department for Education about the academy's future status, means that the introduction of actions to improve the school have been left to leaders and governors who were in place at the time of the section 5 inspection which judged leadership and management to be inadequate.

The academy's integrated statement of action and improvement plan addresses in detail each of the areas for improvement identified in the last section 5 inspection. It identifies the persons responsible for leading or taking actions. Planned actions have appropriate timescales and success criteria are included. However, the statement is not fit for purpose because success criteria for achievement are overly ambitious and those monitoring and evaluating actions are not sufficiently independent. There is confusion about the setting of aspirational targets in order to motivate students and the setting of challenging overall achievement targets that the academy expects to reach by the end of the current academic year. As a result, success criteria for achievement do not represent a clear and accurate picture of what outcomes are

expected if all actions have the impact intended. While the monitoring and evaluation of actions have been allocated to different individuals or groups, these are mainly members of the academy – either current leaders or governors – and hence are not sufficiently independent.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgement was made:

The academy's statement of action, which includes its improvement plan, is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers and that the headteacher contacts the monitoring inspector to discuss any circumstances where the academy may wish to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Gwendoline Coates  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:  
[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [[open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The lead inspector