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2 December 2015

Mr 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 with Julia Morris and Jacqueline Newsome, Ofsted Inspectors, to your academy on 18–19 November 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint NQTs. However, you should contact the monitoring inspector to discuss any circumstances where the academy may wish to appoint NQTs.

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

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014

- Improve teaching to at least good, particularly in English and mathematics, so that achievement improves significantly by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching and reducing the amount that requires improvement through rigorous and accurate monitoring and prompt action that is evaluated carefully for impact
  - ensuring that teachers have high expectations and are supported to use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that build rapidly on pupils' achievements from their starting points and provide increased challenge, particularly for middle ability pupils and disadvantaged pupils
  - sharing more effectively existing good practice to improve teachers' questioning so that pupils are challenged to develop their oral responses, using subject-related language where appropriate
  - improve the quality of marking so that there are higher expectations of both the quality and quantity of work set and pupils know exactly what to do to make progress.
  
- Improve the management of behaviour so that it is good in all lessons and at all times of the day around the academy by:
  - ensuring that all teachers deal with low level disruption in lessons effectively and promptly
  - increasing supervision at break and lunch times, particularly in those areas where pupils are at some distance from academy buildings.
  
- As a matter of urgency, improve safety around the building by:
  - carrying out an audit of repairs and safe storage needed, acting rapidly on this information.
  
- Take rapid action to improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders rapidly and rigorously address weaknesses in teaching and learning, taking all appropriate evidence into account, so that judgements made are accurate and lead to effective action
  - ensuring that senior and middle leaders have a clear understanding of what constitutes good achievement and therefore an accurate view of the academy's performance in comparison to other schools nationally
  - improving leadership of English and mathematics, so that those responsible have a clearer view of what needs to be done to improve pupils' progress and take an active role in raising achievement in their subjects
  - evaluating the way in which pupil premium can be more effectively used so that it has a significantly greater impact on closing the gap between these pupils and others in the academy
  - ensuring that the governing body more rigorously holds academy leaders to account for the quality of teaching and achievement.

An external review of governance and of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 18–19 November 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with: the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders; groups of pupils; the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body; the regional director of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and the headteacher of The Rawlett School. Parts of 21 lessons were observed, some jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors visited tutor periods and observed pupils around the academy at lesson change, break and lunchtimes.

### **Context**

A new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have been appointed from existing members, and two new governors are now in post. The senior leadership team has been restructured and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed from the existing team. Since September, a new head of English has been appointed. Six teachers left the academy at the end of the summer term in the following subjects: English (two staff), humanities, modern languages, drama and business studies. Since the last monitoring inspection two staff have undergone capability procedures, both of whom have left or are about to leave the school. The academy now receives school-to-school support from The Rawlett School and support from the AET (of which The Rawlett School is a member).

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Academy information for 2015 indicates a rise in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more pass grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, and in the proportion gaining passes in all the English Baccalaureate subjects. Attainment and progress in mathematics increased and matched academy targets but that in English declined. Attainment and progress in a large number of subjects improved, but in too many subjects attainment and progress declined, indicating that too much inconsistency remains in performance across subjects.

The attainment and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below that of other pupils, although their performance in mathematics, as with other groups and pupils overall, has improved.

The gap between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally and within the academy has narrowed in mathematics but has widened in English. Overall, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils continues to be too wide.

Academy information on the progress of current Year 11 pupils, and of younger pupils, suggests strong improvement in many subject areas. In general standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Overall, the quality of teaching is improving, as indicated by the more positive impact it is having on the progress pupils are making. Lessons engage pupils and pupils say they enjoy them. There is increasing evidence of teachers promoting and reinforcing pupils' literacy skills. However, tutor time observed during the inspection was not always used effectively to engage pupils in the planned activity of silent reading. Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Assessment is more accurate as a result of external moderation and more effective internal checking.

Where teaching is strong, teachers provide appropriate levels of challenge so that pupils of all abilities are stretched and make the progress they should. Teachers use well-targeted questioning to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to develop their thinking and oral skills. In these lessons, independence and resilience are encouraged so that pupils learn to solve problems by themselves and work productively on their own. For example, in a Year 8 humanities lesson about whether war is ever justified, pupils were encouraged to think hard about current international conflicts and terrorist events. Their responses were measured, thoughtful and perceptive because the teacher posed challenging questions and gave them time to reflect and discuss key issues with their peers before responding.

Where teaching is weaker, teachers don't always explain clearly the tasks pupils are expected to do; nor do they adapt planned activities in response to how well pupils' understanding is developing. In too many lessons, a lack of challenge still limits the rate of progress pupils make, particularly the most able.

A review of pupils' work during lesson observations suggests that teachers implement the academy's marking policy consistently. However, the quality and impact of this, in terms of pupils improving their work by correcting errors or responding to challenging 'even better if' questions, is variable. Not all pupils have a clear understanding of their targets for individual subjects, or what they can do to accelerate their progress in order to meet them.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning and are respectful towards each other, to staff and to visitors. Teachers deal effectively with low-level disruption. A new behaviour policy has been introduced that pupils understand and welcome. It is too soon to formally evaluate its impact. Leaders continue to review how to resolve the issue of overcrowding and congestion that occurs at certain times in certain areas of the academy. The restructured lunch breaks have already considerably improved this situation.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Following the restructuring of the senior leadership team, roles and responsibilities of each post are now much clearer. This, linked to more rigorous performance management targets, means that the accountability of each post holder in relation to pupils' outcomes is unambiguous. The restructuring gives senior leaders more autonomy to develop strategies in their areas of responsibility, and ensures the headteacher focuses more on overall strategic planning.

Each member of the senior leadership team is a faculty improvement partner. This is an important role intended to provide challenge and support to faculty leaders, for example in relation to monitoring progress against targets. This role is not yet being carried out consistently or effectively by all members of the senior leadership team because not all of them recognise the importance of this responsibility.

Changes at faculty leader level are being implemented more promptly where underperformance is identified. Leadership in mathematics is having a positive impact on achievement and new leadership in English is already beginning to have a positive impact on systems. The inconsistency in achievement across subjects reflects similar inconsistencies in the quality of leadership at this level.

A range of new quality assurance and enhancement strategies to improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning are being introduced. These include regular, six-weekly cycles of analysis and evaluation at whole-academy and faculty level, which are intended to accelerate the pace and impact of improvement actions. In addition, improved professional development of teachers and teaching assistants, some of which is a result of school-to-school support, is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Improved target setting is now in place and targets for individual pupils are now both challenging and achievable.

Monitoring and analyses of behaviour incidents by type, and of attendance by groups, is not yet sufficiently detailed to enable targeted actions to be taken to improve these outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation of the behaviour, attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils is not yet sufficiently coherent and actions are not yet concerted or timely enough to close existing gaps quickly.

The governing body are knowledgeable about the academy's performance and have a clear commitment to bringing about necessary improvement. They are challenging the headteacher and senior leaders more effectively, particularly when they feel progress in improving aspects of the academy is too slow.

The changes being made to leadership at all levels suggest that the academy is improving the capacity of its leaders to bring about change – although the impact of this on pupil outcomes is yet to be realised.

The school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements.

## **External support**

Leaders are being very well supported and very effectively challenged by The Rawlett School, a local academy that is part of the AET academy chain. This support is assisting with the changes that are taking place at senior leadership level and is integral to improved external moderation and validation of assessment in English and mathematics. The school-to-school support with The Rawlett School also enables Wilnecote High School to benefit from working with the AET's mathematics and English subject networks and from its regular quality assurance and challenge visits. Support is not a one-way process and a number of faculties, in both schools, are now actively sharing their good practice and cross-moderating their pupils' work.