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Dear Mr Suttanwood

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chase High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 1 and 2 April 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November 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, Liz Smith, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the chair of the trust and chair of the local school committee, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We also visited lessons, met with staff, spoke to pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunch time. We considered the responses and free-text comments received during the inspection to Ofsted Parent View. We took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. We also scrutinised a range of documents including the school's post-inspection action plan. 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.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

HMCI is of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders have taken swift and well-considered action to establish effective systems and plans that were lacking at the time of the previous inspection. The school has a clear, appropriate plan to ensure that pupils are safe and to improve behaviour and attitudes, the quality of education and personal development. This plan is regularly evaluated and updated. The trust has appointed a new chair and several new members of the local school committee to improve its oversight of the school's work.

The school has taken effective action to address the issues with safeguarding identified at the previous inspection. The school have improved systems and have established a better culture of safeguarding. The school makes better use of risk assessments, so that pupils now receive effective help if they are vulnerable, for example, to harmful sexual behaviours. The school provides effective support for pupils who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health and well-being. The school has provided training for staff to ensure that they are aware of risks such as sexual harassment, and how to respond to them. The school has made it easier for pupils to report concerns, using strategies like 'tell us' cards.

Leaders have worked with pupils to ensure that they have trusted adults they can turn to if they feel unsafe. Staff regularly speak to pupils to check whether they feel safe and that they know how to report concerns. Pupils now feel safer in school. The school has improved the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. The school has given more curriculum time to it. This means that pupils are much more aware of how to keep themselves safe, and how to treat others. Consequently, although a few pupils are still reluctant to seek support for themselves and others, the majority will report incidents when they feel unsafe or badly treated by their peers. This is because they have more confidence that the school will act swiftly to support them.

The school recognised that pupils' behaviour, particularly towards each other, needed to improve. The school has worked with pupils and staff to sharpen their understanding of what is unacceptable language, so that they recognise and report it more often. The school have used assemblies and the PSHE programme to address issues that were seen as 'banter'. As a result, pupils say that they encounter less discriminatory language than they did.

The school has improved the way it collates information about where and when poor behaviour occurs. Leaders use this information to inform their actions to improve behaviour. The number of suspensions is still high, but it is falling. Pupils receive a wider range of rewards. The school is becoming a calmer and happier place to be. This is

evident in the significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Although most lessons are calm and purposeful, some pupils still disrupt the learning of others. This is because some staff do not apply your high expectations of behaviour as well as you intend. You are aware that further improvements are needed to ensure that staff use the behaviour policy effectively. Some pupils still do not demonstrate positive attitudes to school or treat others with respect and kindness.

The school is aware that its curriculum does not provide pupils with the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need to achieve highly. You have begun to address this. Leaders are revising the curriculum in key stage 3 so that it has greater rigour and ambition and builds pupils' learning over time. Staff have received training so that they use consistent approaches. For instance, teachers frequently revisit prior learning so that pupils can move onto new knowledge more confidently. Leaders are also reviewing how pupils' knowledge is checked, so that gaps and misunderstandings can be addressed.

The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) more accurately. Support plans are clearer. This means that staff now have more helpful information about pupils in their classes. They have resources and strategies to use to support pupils with SEND. However, these strategies have been shared recently, so staff do not use them consistently well in lessons.

The school understands that pupils need to be able to read well to access the curriculum successfully. Staff identify weaker readers in Years 7 and 8. They receive support to become more fluent and accurate readers. However, staff do not know how well all pupils can read in other year groups. Staff do not consistently use information well enough about pupils' ability to read. Consequently, many pupils do not access the curriculum or achieve as well as they should.

Students in the sixth form learn about some relevant social issues, higher education and careers. They enjoy school. However, the school does not provide effective enough support to enable students in the sixth form to study independently. Consequently, students in the sixth form do not achieve the outcomes that they should.

The school has improved how well the school checks the quality of its provision. Those responsible for governance now have a much more accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school's work. They are more willing to challenge and hold leaders to account. Leaders now have a clearer understanding of the quality of education provided in the school. They are beginning to use this to inform their professional development programme for staff and this is beginning to show in improvements to the delivery of the curriculum. The impact of professional development is clearer to see in other areas of the school such as behaviour and safeguarding. There is now an open culture, where staff are supported to improve. Staff value this and feel well-supported with their well-being and workload.

The school are using the voice of pupils to shape the school's actions. The school makes increasingly effective use of support from the trust and other external agencies to check and improve the quality of its work.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Woodley
His Majesty's Inspector