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Dear Mr Dalziel

Special measures monitoring inspection of The King David High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 22 and 23 November 2022, 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 November 2021.

During the inspection, Pippa Jackson-Maitland, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, staff and trustees 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 carried out visits to lessons, meetings with other staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work, and a review of various school documentation and feedback from the Ofsted staff survey and free-text comments from Ofsted Parent View. I have considered all of this evidence in coming to my judgement.

King David High School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Earlier this term, the chair of the governing body resigned from his position as chair, although he has remained a governor. The vice-chair of the governing body has stepped up as interim chair of the governing body. Governors intend to appoint a new chair at their full governing body meeting next month. The new assistant headteacher, who was appointed last term, took up post in September.

Since the last monitoring visit, you and the senior leadership team have acted with a greater sense of urgency to address the weaknesses in the school. You have revised the school's improvement plan to ensure that it sets out clearly the required actions to bring about change. The plan includes realistic timescales and success criteria which leaders are using to judge progress against the areas for improvement. In response to the additional priority identified at my last monitoring visit, you have included an area for development focused on improving pupils' behaviour. Leaders have already begun to take action to get behaviour back on track. The revised improvement plan is fit for purpose and is serving as a useful working document to keep leaders focused on what matters most.

You have galvanised the new leadership team and channelled their energy to focus on the school's core priorities. You have restructured aspects of the middle leadership team to help build capacity by drawing on their strengths and expertise. Leaders have set in motion a sequence of appropriate actions to tackle most of the school's pressing issues. Some of these improvements, particularly those in relation to safeguarding, are becoming more embedded. However, a key aspect of leadership that lags behind the other priority areas is governance.

In September, leaders implemented changes to the key stage 3 curriculum to make it equitable for all pupils. Leaders have now disbanded the previous system for teaching the creative subjects. This is because it resulted in some of the younger pupils not accessing the same curriculum offer as others. The revised curriculum means that pupils can now study creative subjects to the same depth as their peers.

Leaders have made timetabling adjustments to ensure that all pupils, including those from the Yavneh Boys and Yavneh Girls sections, can mix socially with each other. For example, Yavneh Girls can have their lunch and socialise with Yavneh Boys because lunchtimes overlap entirely. There are also some lessons that accommodate Yavneh Boys and Yavneh Girls together. Similarly, all pupils can participate together in extra-curricular activities. However, there are some logistical issues related to staggered lunchtimes that mean pupils, regardless of their sex, cannot always opt to do their preferred activity. Leaders are working on how this issue can be resolved. Several pupils spoke favourably about the new timetabling arrangements and said that they now have more opportunity to see their friends at lunchtime from the Yavneh Girls section.

Leaders have taken further action to improve the curriculum for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The school's programme is now taught, for almost all year groups, as a timetabled weekly lesson. Leaders have ensured that the teachers who teach the PSHE programme have been well trained to deliver the content. The programme includes a wide range of appropriate topics that are covered in sufficient

depth. However, Year 10 pupils only experience drop-down PSHE days. This has led to some pupils forgetting key knowledge and not building their understanding effectively. Leaders have recently started some quality assurance work to determine how well the PSHE curriculum is being implemented.

Following the weaknesses identified at the last monitoring inspection, leaders have begun to overhaul the school's careers programme. Leaders have appointed a new leader for careers provision and have drafted a new strategy for careers education. This sets out the key learning outcomes expected by the end of each key stage. However, it provides less clarity about how careers knowledge is ordered over time to build towards defined end points. Pupils and sixth-form students spoke positively about the changes to careers education. They said that they are given helpful support, for example, with writing their personal statements. Subject leaders have recently audited their subjects and identified where careers information can be incorporated to improve this aspect of provision further.

Leaders have strengthened the arrangements for safeguarding. You have increased the capacity of the safeguarding team by adding two more deputy designated safeguarding leaders. Key safeguarding messages now permeate across the school. Staff are more vigilant and pick up concerns earlier, including those related to pupils' mental health. Leaders take prompt action to keep pupils safe. The arrangements for safeguarding are now effective and staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Most pupils reported that they have a trusted adult in school who they can turn to for guidance. However, there remains a small number of staff who pupils perceive to be less approachable.

Improvements in governance have been slow to materialise due to a lack of urgency. Governors have not acted on, with sufficient rigour, many of the recommendations from the external review of governance that was carried out six months ago. For example, there are still too many governors who have not completed basic governor training. Consequently, some governors do not understand their roles and responsibilities. Therefore, they are unable to hold leaders to account effectively. However, there have been some recent improvements. For instance, governors are now far less likely to get involved in the school's operational matters.

Leaders have taken some swift action to try and stem the decline in pupils' poor behaviour. They have drawn on external support to help with training staff to better manage behaviour. Leaders have put in place a new policy and shared it with staff. However, the approach to issuing sanctions for unacceptable behaviour is not clear. This is leading to inconsistency in teachers' implementation of the policy. It also remains the case that there are relatively high numbers of internal exclusions involving the same pupils. This indicates that the sanctions that these pupils receive are not making a difference to the behaviour of some pupils.

Leaders have sought advice from a range of external sources to support them with improvements to safeguarding, behaviour, the PSHE curriculum and careers education. This external support is helping leaders to identify gaps in provision and plan a way

forward. Governors have not commissioned further external support to help them move forward, despite very much needing to do so.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Hill
His Majesty's Inspector