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08 September 2025

Mr Ben Ryder
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ryder

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Berwick Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 9 July 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 took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the Monitoring Inspection Handbook.

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, I discussed with you, other senior leaders 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. I also spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, met with pupils and reviewed a sample of documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to leadership. You and several other senior leaders are new to your roles. These appointments have helped to accelerate the pace of school improvement and identify appropriate next steps. The school recognises that there is more to do to achieve these priorities and realise the school's vision of a high-quality education for all. The focus of this first monitoring visit was to review the progress made since the last inspection.

The school has an effective curriculum that clearly sets out what pupils will learn and in what order. This curriculum identifies which topics pupils might find particularly difficult. The curriculum also identifies important vocabulary that pupils need to master. However, the implementation of this curriculum is still too variable. The activity choices staff make in lessons are not as consistently effective as they could be. For example, sometimes pupils are ready to move on to new, or more complex, learning but are not provided with the opportunity to do so. This limits the depth of understanding that they develop of the intended curriculum.

The professional development of staff at the school closely matches the school's improvement priorities. The school is working to help staff to gain the necessary skills and experience to ask high-quality questions to check on pupil's understanding. In some lessons, this does take place and misconceptions are quickly addressed. However, this is not consistent across the school. Sometimes, explanations or examples given by staff do not ensure that pupils have understood what is intended. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning are sometimes too brief, which limits opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of certain topics.

The school's work to improve attendance has been highly effective. Pupils in Year 11 have benefitted most from this work, and their attendance rates now match the rest of the school more closely. The school has successfully reduced the rates of persistent absence. This improvement has been most notable for disadvantaged pupils. The gap between rates of attendance for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged peers has narrowed considerably. The school has provided several additional opportunities to encourage positive attendance amongst certain pupil groups. The school recognises that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils attend as well as they could.

The board of trustees has recruited several new members with a wide range of skills and knowledge. This work has strengthened the board's oversight and understanding of educational standards at the school. Although some are new to post, trustees have made a deliberate effort to understand the school and its priorities. Trustees have a realistic view of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. Those responsible for governance are highly committed to the school and its pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

John Linkins
His Majesty's Inspector