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24 March 2016

Mrs Elaine Stiles  
Cherry Willingham Community School  
Croft Lane  
Cherry Willingham  
Lincoln  
LN3 4JP

Dear Mrs Stiles

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Cherry Willingham Community School**

Following my visit with Lynn Cox, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 15 and 16 March 2016, 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 that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in June 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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 with regard to the areas for improvement that were identified at the time of the previous inspection.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hollingsworth  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2015.**

- Ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements by:
  - updating the school's safeguarding policy so that it is in line with current legislation and provides adequate information to staff on how to identify and report their concerns
  - making clear the roles and responsibilities of all staff, including that of the designated safeguarding lead
  - providing appropriate support to enable staff with safeguarding duties to carry out their roles effectively
  - developing appropriate arrangements which set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information between the staff at the school, with other professionals, and with the local authority safeguarding children board
  - developing clear and robust recording and reporting arrangements, which are then followed rigorously by all staff.
- Implement more effective systems to enable pupils to share with the staff any concerns they may have about their safety and that of others.
- Ensure that the governing body carries out its duties effectively in relation to safeguarding.
- Ensure that all staff have the skills and confidence to address minor instances of disruption from a minority of students who interfere with learning.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 15–16 March 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, four members of the governing body and three representatives of an educational consultancy providing support services on behalf of the local authority. Inspectors also met with members of the teaching and support staff as well as pupils from across all year groups. Inspectors observed 15 lessons, two of which were jointly conducted with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed three registration periods and two assemblies. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils between lessons and at lunchtime, during which they spoke with pupils. Due to concerns relating to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching which have emerged since the last monitoring inspection, the lead inspector scrutinised documents and held meetings relating to these two areas. This was in addition to evaluating the impact of the school's actions since the last monitoring inspection on personal development, behaviour and welfare and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, two senior leaders have left the school. The headteacher has appointed two members of staff already employed by the school to replace these senior leaders.

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

Senior leaders have maintained an effective focus on ensuring that pupils are safe at the school. The headteacher has further strengthened safeguarding procedures by ensuring that more staff have received the training appropriate to support the designated safeguarding lead. Senior leaders have further developed the systems by which pupils can communicate any concerns they may have. Senior leaders take appropriate action where pupils do express concern. For example, senior leaders have taken prompt action to resolve girls' concerns relating to their toilets. Those pupils inspectors met said that they felt safe and had staff they could speak to if they had any concerns. They were confident these staff would deal with their concerns effectively.

Senior leaders have closely monitored the new positive behaviour policy since its introduction in January 2016. School information indicates that this policy has significantly improved pupils' behaviour in the classroom. The overwhelming majority of pupils and staff inspectors met said that behaviour had improved since the introduction of the policy. Teachers said that, as a result, pupils now complete more work during lessons. The books inspectors looked at confirmed this.

Governors continue to monitor the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding regularly checks the school's safeguarding policies to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. She also

regularly checks the school's systems for keeping children safe to ensure that they are effective. She suggests improvements where these are appropriate and closely monitors that senior leaders take effective action in response.

Since the previous inspection that judged the school's overall effectiveness to be inadequate, there has been a decline in pupils' achievement. Because of this, senior leaders have rightly recognised that achievement is inadequate and that the quality of teaching is not good enough. They have begun to take action to ensure that there are rapid improvements in these areas. For example, the headteacher has appointed two new senior leaders to raise pupil achievement and improve the quality of teaching and learning. These leaders have been quick to take action to ensure that leaders at all levels focus on improving the quality of teaching in order to enable pupils to make the progress they should. However, these actions are recent and it is not possible to measure the impact that they have had on raising standards in these areas. Senior leaders have agreed to draw up a comprehensive action plan relating to improving the quality of teaching and raising pupil achievement, and submit this to the lead inspector by 24 March 2016.

Senior leaders have commissioned external reviews of those subjects where there was significant underachievement at GCSE in 2015. These reviews have provided subject leaders with clear guidance about how to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. However, the resultant action plans that subject leaders have drawn up do not focus sufficiently on those actions that will secure the necessary improvements. Subject leaders are currently revising these plans. The headteacher will send the revised action plans to the lead inspector by 24 March 2016.

Senior leaders have recognised that their systems for evaluating the impact of how they use the pupil premium have not been sufficiently effective. Pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority. The headteacher has taken swift action to resolve this concern. The senior leader with responsibility for raising pupils' achievement is now monitoring how the school spends the pupil premium. The headteacher has organised for an external review of pupil premium spending. In the meantime, senior leaders will submit to the lead inspector a clear plan of intended actions that the school will adopt to support disadvantaged pupils by 24 March 2016.

Governors are fully aware of the decline in pupils' achievement and recognise the urgency with which the school must improve the quality of teaching. Governors ask challenging questions of senior leaders in relation to pupils' achievement and have met with subject leaders to review their action plans. Governors recognise that these plans are not detailed enough to ensure the necessary improvements take place. They have challenged both senior leaders and subject leaders to this effect. Governors check on the quality of the school's provision by conducting their own visits to the school, where they visit lessons and speak with pupils. Governors are insistent that the quality of teaching must improve.

## **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement**

- Senior leaders have further developed their systems for ensuring that pupils are safe at the school. The overwhelming majority of pupils now feel safe.
- The introduction of a new behaviour policy that focuses on rewarding positive behaviour has had a positive impact upon pupils' behaviour in lessons. School records show that incidents of low-level disruption have reduced significantly. Pupils who met with inspectors said that behaviour had improved.
- Senior leaders monitor the use of registration time more closely to ensure that teachers make effective use of this time to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. As a result, pupils' understanding of how to be effective citizens in modern Britain continues to develop well.
- Senior leaders rightly recognise that achievement and the quality of teaching are not good enough. They have begun to take action to address these concerns.

## **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement**

- The proportion of pupils who are absent from school is too high, and is above national levels. Senior leaders' actions to ensure that pupils engage more regularly with school have not been sufficiently effective.
- Exclusions continue to be too high. The numbers of pupils who receive fixed-term exclusions and the proportion of pupils who are excluded more than once remain above national levels.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in their learning. More recently, senior leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching. However, it is too early to measure the impact of these actions.
- Subject leaders' action plans to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement do not focus sufficiently on those actions which will ensure the necessary rapid improvements take place.
- Until recently, senior leaders have not sufficiently evaluated the impact of their use of pupil premium funding to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance at school and raise their achievement.

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

The quality of teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils make the progress they should. Where teaching is effective, teachers possess good subject knowledge and are able to use this to design creative activities that engage the pupils' interest. Teachers are able to use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to develop their ideas further. However, not all teachers have high enough expectations of their pupils. They do not create activities that sufficiently challenge pupils and fully develop their understanding. Some teachers do not use questioning precisely enough to check on, and explore further, pupils' understanding. On these occasions, pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning.

Senior leaders have taken action to ensure that teachers understand what senior leaders expect of them when they deliver their lessons. Senior leaders have also introduced systems by which both they and subject leaders check that teachers are meeting these expectations. However, these systems do not sufficiently focus on checking the quality of teachers' practice. Consequently, senior leaders' and subject leaders' actions are not improving the quality of teaching rapidly enough.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved due to the new positive behaviour policy. In the lessons inspectors observed, a very large majority of pupils had positive attitudes to their learning. However, not all teachers take advantage of this to ensure that pupils complete work that secures their understanding.

Pupils' behaviour around the school site is good. Pupils conduct themselves well and behave respectfully towards each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. Movement between lessons is orderly, and very few pupils are late to lessons. The school's information demonstrates that, since the introduction of the new behaviour policy, incidents of pupils arriving late at lessons have reduced significantly.

'Subject Immersion Days' and registration time enable pupils to consider topics that develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Subject Immersion Days are days where pupils consider issues that relate to their school community and the wider world. Since the previous monitoring inspection, pupils have studied a range of topics, including terrorism, respecting other people's religions and cultural differences, and keeping safe online. These opportunities enable pupils to develop a secure understanding of how to be effective citizens and how to stay safe.

The proportion of pupils who are absent from school is too high, as is the proportion of pupils who are absent regularly from school. Both proportions are above national levels. Senior leaders recognise that they need to do more to raise pupils' attendance, particularly those disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Since the previous inspection that judged the school's overall effectiveness to be inadequate, there has been a decline in pupils' achievement. For example, the proportions of pupils who made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics at GCSE in 2015 were well below national levels. The school's performance information for current Year 11 pupils would indicate that the proportions of those pupils making the progress expected of them in English and mathematics remain low. Furthermore, the target grades for many Year 10 pupils are not high enough, while too few pupils are on track to achieve these targets.

The school's performance information does indicate that the proportions of pupils making the progress expected of them in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 3 are improving. However, this improvement is not across all years and all

groups of pupils. Furthermore, the gap between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3 and other pupils nationally remains too wide in some year groups.

### **External support**

Leaders at all levels continue to engage with external organisations in order to review the quality of the school's provision. This includes working with a local school to review the quality of teaching in mathematics. The school is now receiving increased support from the educational consultancy that provides support services for the local authority. However, the quality of this support has been variable. The feedback that these advisers have provided has not been sufficiently accurate. Consequently, the advice and guidance that these advisers offer the senior leaders are not always appropriate to secure rapid improvement.

### **Additional areas for improvement**

- Senior leaders must check the attendance and progress of all groups of pupils more precisely to enable leaders at all levels to secure rapid improvement in all pupils' attendance and achievement.
- Subject leaders, particularly of English, mathematics, science and humanities, must take timely and effective action to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement.
- All teachers must plan activities that engage and challenge all pupils, to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.