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15 July 2016

Mrs Elaine Stiles  
Cherry Willingham Community School  
Croft Lane  
Cherry Willingham  
Lincoln  
Lincolnshire  
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Dear Mrs Stiles

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

Following my visit with Sally Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 21–22 June 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 third 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.

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. 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 third monitoring inspection on 21–22 June 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the raising standards lead, and the teaching and learning leader. Inspectors met with three members of the governing body and a representative from the educational consultancy that provides support services on behalf of the local authority. Inspector also met with the subject leaders for English, mathematics and science, with members of the teaching staff, with the school's pastoral leaders and with pupils from across all year groups except Year 11. Inspectors observed 17 lessons, nine of which were joint observations with the teaching and learning leader. Inspectors also observed four registration periods. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils before school, between lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. During these occasions, inspectors spoke with pupils. The inspectors looked at pupils' books, both in lessons and as a separate activity. Due to the concerns relating to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching that emerged during the last monitoring inspection, inspectors scrutinised documents and held meetings relating to these two areas. This was in addition to evaluating the impact of the school's actions on personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, governors have appointed a technology teacher, a physical education teacher and a pastoral support officer.

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

Senior leaders and governors have ensured that the procedures for helping to keep pupils safe continue to be thorough and effective. They have also acted promptly to remedy those areas of concern that arose during the last monitoring inspection.

Senior leaders frequently review their procedures for keeping pupils safe to identify where they can improve them further. They undergo regular training to ensure that their practices are effective and up to date. Regular meetings between those staff who have responsibility for safeguarding pupils, as well as the school's frequent and tenacious contact with external agencies, ensures that pupils receive appropriate support where necessary. Governors systematically check the school's procedures for safeguarding. Furthermore, they undertake appropriate external training to ensure that their understanding of safeguarding requirements is accurate.

Senior leaders continue to monitor pupils' behaviour closely. They take effective action to ensure that they deal with any poor behaviour promptly and provide effective support to those pupils whom such behaviour may have affected. All pupils who met with the inspectors said that, where they may have a concern, there are staff to whom they can speak and that they are confident these staff will take effective action to support them. All these pupils were clear that the behaviour in lessons has improved since the last inspection as a direct result of the introduction of the positive discipline initiatives. All these pupils said that teachers apply the new behaviour system consistently.

The teaching and learning leader has taken effective action to ensure that all staff are focused on improving the quality of teaching. She has provided all teachers with clear guidance as to the senior leaders' and governors' expectations relating to the quality of teaching in the school. She has also introduced weekly training sessions to enable teachers to reflect on, and improve, their practice. The school's own records of the quality of teaching indicate that there has been a significant improvement in teaching since the previous monitoring inspection. Senior leaders have worked with external organisations, including senior leaders from local secondary schools, to ensure that this evaluation is accurate. In many of the visits to classrooms, inspectors observed teachers using questioning more effectively and setting activities that met pupils' needs.

Through wide-ranging training, subject leaders have sharpened their skills in monitoring the quality of teaching. This training has included working with senior leaders from local secondary schools. As a result, subject leaders now have a more secure understanding of how to evaluate the quality of teaching in their subject areas. Furthermore, they are able to provide effective support to those teachers whose practice does not meet senior leaders' expectations.

The leader responsible for raising standards, the raising standards leader, has developed a more effective system by which leaders at all levels monitor and track pupils' progress. This system enables senior leaders to have a more precise understanding of pupils' achievement and to identify quickly where pupils are falling behind. The system also provides teachers with appropriate information to enable them to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils. However, this system does not yet provide staff with sufficiently precise information across all subjects at key stage 3. Where the information is less precise, teachers are not always able to set pupils activities that are appropriate to their needs.

To assist them in raising pupils' attendance, the attendance officer has refined the information she provides for pastoral leaders. It is now more detailed and timely. Because of this, pastoral leaders are able to engage more effectively with those pupils whose attendance is too low. As a result, the rate of attendance for all pupils has increased since the last inspection. However, overall absence for this group remains above national levels.

The raising standards leader has taken swift action to ensure that the school's support for disadvantaged pupils is more effective. She has undertaken a thorough review of the school's support for these pupils. In doing so, she has refined the systems by which she monitors the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, she is able to identify more quickly those disadvantaged pupils whose attendance or achievement is too low. The support these pupils receive is now more effective. Because of this, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are absent has reduced. Furthermore, there has been an improvement in disadvantaged pupils' achievement, particularly at key stage 4.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders. They have a very precise understanding of the effectiveness of the school's provision. They know the impact of the recent actions leaders at all levels have taken, particularly in response to the further areas of improvement that the last monitoring inspection identified. Governors are secure in their view due to the actions they undertake to check the accuracy of the information they receive from leaders.

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

- The school's procedures to safeguard pupils continue to be thorough and effective.
- The school's behaviour policy continues to have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. All pupils who met with the inspectors said that behaviour has improved because all teachers are consistent in applying the behaviour policy.
- The proportion of pupils who have been excluded has significantly reduced since the last monitoring inspection.
- The teaching and learning leader has provided effective opportunities for teachers to reflect on, and improve, their practice in the classroom.
- Through the training and support they have received, subject leaders now have a more accurate understanding of how to evaluate the quality of teaching.
- A more effective system for monitoring pupils' achievement is now in place.
- Pastoral leaders are working more effectively with those pupils whose attendance is too low, to ensure that they attend school more regularly.
- Leaders have rightly reviewed the support that disadvantaged pupils receive.

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

- While the proportion of pupils who are absent from school is reducing, overall absence remains above national levels.
- The school's system for monitoring pupils' achievement does not provide precise enough information relating to pupils' progress in some subjects at key stage 3.
- The improvements in teaching are not consistent in all subjects across the school.
- The progress of pupils in Year 10 remains too low.

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

Since the previous monitoring inspection, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching across most subjects. This is due to the leaders' increased focus on improving the quality of teaching through weekly training sessions for teachers.

In their visits to classrooms, inspectors observed that many teachers used questioning skilfully to secure pupils' understanding, and to explore their ideas further. For example, in a Year 10 history lesson, the teacher's challenging questions enabled all pupils to explore their understanding of crime and punishment over time. Teachers are also providing pupils with activities that increasingly meet their needs, and stretch and challenge them in their understanding. However, such practice is not consistent across all subjects and all year groups. There are occasions where the work teachers set is not appropriate to their needs. When this occurs, pupils can lose concentration and do not make the progress that they should.

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

Behaviour around the school site and in lessons continues to be appropriate. The school's behaviour records indicate that there has been a significant reduction in those occasions where pupils' behaviour does not meet the leaders' expectations. Where such occasions do occur, the staff's response is effective. Because of this, the proportion of pupils who receive fixed-term exclusions has reduced.

Pastoral leaders' work to monitor and support those pupils whose absence is too low has increased in its effectiveness. Because of this, the proportion of pupils who are absent from school has reduced. This is particularly the case for those pupils who are regularly absent from school, the proportion of whom is now below national levels. Absence of disadvantaged pupils has significantly reduced over the last term. This is due to the closer support the raising standards leader provides to disadvantaged pupils whose attendance is too low. However, the overall absence of all pupils and of disadvantaged pupils remains above national levels.

Senior leaders continue in their drive to improve pupils' understanding of the community in which they live and of fundamental British values. Inspectors observed pupils vigorously discussing the imminent referendum on the membership of the European Union. They were able to express their views and listened sensitively and respectfully to each other, even where they differed in opinion. Pupils have also considered such topics as anti-bullying, healthy relationships, the nature of terrorism, the importance of human rights and online safety.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

Since the last monitoring inspection, there has been an improvement in the achievement of Year 11 pupils. The school's own performance information indicates that the proportions of Year 11 pupils who are making the progress expected of them in English and mathematics have increased. However, these proportions remain below national levels. Furthermore, the progress of pupils in Year 10 remains too low.

The books that inspectors looked at in key stage 3 demonstrated that there are increasing proportions of pupils who are achieving the progress expected of them in English, mathematics and science. This is due to the increased focus by leaders at all levels on ensuring that teachers plan activities that meet pupils' needs. However, this improvement in pupils' progress at key stage 3 is not consistent across all subjects and in all years.

## **External support**

The school continues to engage well with a variety of external support to safeguard pupils, to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement. Representatives from the educational consultancy that provides support services for the local authority have continued to work with the school. In particular, they have provided effective support to the raising standards lead and the teaching and learning leader, both of whom took up their role just before the last monitoring inspection. This support has enabled these leaders to develop their skills quickly. In providing this support, representatives of the educational consultancy have increased the level of challenge they have provided. This is to ensure that leaders at all levels develop the necessary skills to be able to sustain the improvement for themselves.

Senior leaders have engaged with headteachers from local secondary schools to ensure that subject leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are accurate. The raising standards leader has engaged with a range of external organisations to review the quality of support disadvantaged pupils receive. Working with these external organisations has enabled leaders at all levels to clarify the appropriateness of the strategies they have adopted to secure the school's improvement. Furthermore, this external support has enabled them to ensure that their evaluation of the impact of the work they have undertaken is accurate.