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19 November 2014

Mr Simon Ashby  
Headteacher  
Forest Moor School  
Menwith Hill Road  
Harrogate  
North Yorkshire  
HG3 2RA

Dear Mr Ashby

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Forest Moor School (formerly Foremost School)**

Following my visit to your school on 18 November 2014, 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 which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which 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 the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2013

- Improve teaching across the school so that students make at least good progress and attain the standards of which they are capable, by:
  - making sure that what is taught, and the way it is taught, captures the imagination of students so that they want to join in with learning activities and behave well
  - making sure that all teachers in all lessons take responsibility for promoting literacy and communication skills by encouraging students to write more for themselves
  - making sure that teachers use accurate assessment information to help them set work for students that matches their ability and learning needs
  - taking steps to ensure that no teaching is inadequate and enabling good teachers to see what they need to do to become outstanding.
  
- Improve leadership, management and governance of the school and residence, by:
  - making sure that all safeguarding procedures are followed at all times
  - making sure that robust evidence is gathered regularly to help inform senior leaders and governors about standards in the residence and in classrooms
  - ensuring that senior staff and governors base their evaluations of the school's effectiveness on robust, accurate evidence so that they can pinpoint what needs to be done to make improvements
  - making sure that the school employs enough good quality, permanent teachers, prioritising where support is most urgently needed and working more closely with the local authority to find the most useful help
  - making sure that the curriculum includes enough opportunities for students to follow courses that lead to accreditation that matches their potential
  - Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.
  
- Improve behaviour by:
  - making it very clear to students that, whatever their difficulties, certain things are unacceptable in any circumstances and making sure that all staff are consistent in their application of sanctions
  - making sure that all staff identify times when students can take more responsibility for their behaviour and learning rather than allowing them to become dependent on adults to help them all the time
  - increasing levels of attendance and reducing the amount of time that the students who do attend are out of class.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 18 November 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. She talked informally to some pupils.

### **Context**

Following the failure of a procurement process to outsource the running of the school, the local authority reviewed the need for provision of the type offered by Foremost. Having judged that such provision is necessary, the decision was taken at the end of last academic year to keep the school open. However, there have been some key changes in purpose and operation which mean that the school is markedly different from that which was judged to require special measures in March 2013. The residential provision has been closed. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are being admitted and there are plans to admit girls as the year progresses. To recognise these changes the school has a new name, Forest Moor, which reflects its location. The local authority has seconded full time three officers, as headteacher and senior leaders, for two years to establish the school in its new form. The new headteacher is the fourth since the school was placed in special measures.

There have been some changes to staffing. An instructor left in the summer and this term two teachers and the deputy head of care have left. A staffing restructure is under way to match the school's new aims. The school's roll is rising gradually. Key Stage 2 pupils were admitted for the first time at the beginning of this half term. At the time of the inspection there were six students being educated on the school site.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

In 2014 there was an improvement on the previous year in the number and level of qualifications gained by Year 11 students. One student gained four GCSEs at grade C and above, as well as one GCSE at grade D. Others gained between one and three GCSEs, with grades between G and D, in English, mathematics and physical education (short course). Students also gained accreditation in science, geography, personal and social education, and preparation for working life. In the main, students did not make the nationally expected rate of progress. Five of the seven students in this cohort have moved on to college courses or apprenticeships. It is a matter of concern that two are not in education, training or employment.

Current Year 11 students are all following accredited courses, where possible GCSEs or IGCSEs, in English and mathematics. They are also working towards a range of other qualifications, in most instances linked to their vocational placements and

reflecting their individual interests. The progress of students in all year groups in English and mathematics is tracked from their starting points against the nationally expected rate of progress. This is shown on 'flight path' charts that present this information very clearly. More evidence of students' learning is readily available in school than was previously the case. Key Stage 2 pupils are working in books where annotated photographic evidence of activities and learning is included alongside their written work. For older students, some of whom complete all their work off site, hard copy of work is being marked by teachers so a better record of learning is being captured.

### **The quality of teaching**

The secondment of experienced local authority officers, who have a regular teaching commitment, has strengthened the quality of teaching. Their expertise is being used as part of a helpful strategy to support the school's recently qualified teachers. Support also includes regular visits to local primary schools, which have enhanced provision for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.

Lessons observed were lively and engaging, with effective use of games and challenges to capture students' interest. Teachers modelled the appropriate subject-specific language well and created opportunities to extend students' vocabulary. Activities were set at the right level for each student and effective individual support helped to keep them on task. Carefully targeted questioning helped students to articulate their thinking.

The quality of marking has improved. Comments on progress and next steps are at a level accessible to students, some of whom are beginning to respond to challenges set by teachers.

A weekly planning toolkit has been introduced very recently to improve progress by tightening up communication between teachers who are setting and marking work and support staff who are delivering this to students who learn off site. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The headteacher and staff have worked together to establish a new vision and ethos for the school, encapsulated in the school's logo. This ethos is evident in the school's more welcoming public areas and in the free movement around the building. Students' behaviour is managed effectively in this new, more open environment. Relationships are good, as is clear at lunchtimes, when staff and students eat together in a relaxed, sociable atmosphere. Appropriate expectations have been set, such as a zero tolerance of swearing, and, consequently, standards of behaviour have improved. There has been a significant decline in incidents of poor behaviour: most of those logged involve verbal abuse of staff and swearing. The number of

occasions on which physical restraint has been used has declined and is very low. There have been no exclusions to date this term. These are significant improvements.

Overall, there have been some improvements in attendance for the majority of students. At this early stage the attendance of Key Stage 2 pupils is high, despite the fact that they have not been in full-time schooling for some time. This is a consequence of the thorough and effective preparation for their transition to the school, which included home visits by senior staff.

An individual profile of each student's learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs has been drawn up. These include advice on the management of behaviour, which teachers find useful.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The headteacher has worked at pace to develop a new vision and ethos for the school, in collaboration with staff and students. All have contributed to the school's logo, a large version of which is prominent as you enter the school. This encompasses its most important values and aspirations, such as empathy, resilience and respect. The logo is also on the school's new uniform, which students selected and wear regularly. A significant change to the school's purpose is the intention to intervene earlier, with the aim of supporting pupils to re-enter mainstream schooling.

A new development plan has been drawn up with clear success criteria and deadlines. Progress with the plan is reviewed regularly, including as part of the local authority's monitoring. Helpfully, responsibility for priorities is distributed among staff.

The curriculum for each student has been reviewed. Senior staff visited students at home during the summer holiday to ensure that the programme for each individual is closely matched to their needs and aspirations. In the main, this proved an effective strategy, since the majority of Year 11 students are successfully engaged through college courses, alternative provision and work placements, albeit with high levels of staff support. The school is responding promptly and making changes when placements are not successful, for instance for some younger students. Senior leaders recognise the need for a more systematic approach to arrangements with alternative providers. Although some therapeutic aspects of the curriculum are in place, leaders acknowledge that this is an area in need of systematic development.

The governing body has responded rapidly to the changes in the school's direction. It has reconstituted to match the school's new name and reorganised its committees to fit the new ways of working. Governors are well informed about the school's performance through links with particular priorities in the school development plan

and lead members of staff. They make regular, focused visits to the school and participate in the local authority's monitoring committees.

### **External support**

The local authority has taken steps to stabilise the school and made a major investment, in part through long-term staff secondments, to secure continuity of leadership and direction. This follows a long period when frequent changes, both of headteacher and strategic direction, have diluted the overall impact of work to improve the provision for students. Robust arrangements are in place, through regular meetings of monitoring and quality assurance groups, to hold the school's new senior leaders to account, ensure that the local authority's support is appropriate and timely, and to evaluate the impact of this support. The local authority continues to provide curriculum support, for instance for the development of the Duke of Edinburgh's award, as well as support for the management of human resources and finance. The local authority retains control over the school's budget which is in deficit.

The school has recently become a member of a local teaching school alliance and, as well as building relationships with other local schools, is developing links with another similar school out of the area.