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26 November 2014

Christopher Bennet  
Headteacher  
St Peter's School  
St Peter's Road  
Huntingdon  
PE29 7DD

Dear Mr Bennet

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 November 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- refine the school improvement plan so it is always clear how you will measure the impact of actions taken
- increase the number of times you will assess the impact of your actions during the school year
- ensure that your systems for assessing students' attainment and progress become more robust and reliable.
- ensure teaching staff are able to identify what constitutes low-level disruptive behaviour and they are equipped with strategies to tackle this confidently.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, students from Key Stages 3, 4 and the sixth form, and six members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I held a telephone conversation with an independent consultant who is providing support to the school. A discussion took place with you and the assistant headteacher to look at the school's strategies for tackling bullying. I also scrutinised the school's records of recruitment checks on staff. We visited a small number of lessons together to observe students at work and to look at their books.

## **Context**

You started as headteacher on 1 September 2014. Two senior leaders left the school in August 2014 and another senior leader is due to retire in December 2014. You have restructured the senior leadership team.

## **Main findings**

Your school improvement plan addresses all of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. You have produced a short-term plan which covers the autumn term as well as a medium-term plan to cover 2014/15 academic year. The plan would benefit from some refinement. For example, although the plan makes reference to impact, some of your actions could be measured more sharply through quantifiable data and at more regular intervals during the year.

A key improvement has been the restructuring of the senior leadership team. It is now much clearer what each senior leader is responsible for and how their roles complement each other. It is also clear how you will hold each senior leader to account and what training they need to carry out their role effectively. The identification of training needs is important as many have taken on new roles and their leadership experience varies. The quality of subject leaders and their impact is also variable. In 2014 students made welcome gains in their achievement in mathematics at GCSE level, but underachieved in drama, food technology, geography, German, history and product design.

You have sensibly identified a senior leader to lead the management of teaching in the school. You are forming a more accurate profile of the quality of teaching in the school and use a range of information to inform your findings. These include observations of students' learning in lessons, scrutiny of books, analysis of students' outcomes and discussions with students. Historically, your systems for assessing students' attainment and progress have not been sufficiently robust. However, you are using external support well to tackle this.

The quality of teachers' marking is improving. My scrutiny of students' books and discussions with students indicate that an increasing proportion of teachers are using

marking to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Students are responding to their teachers' comments more frequently, which helps them to rectify their mistakes and accelerates their progress.

Your expectations of high standards of behaviour are clear. While major incidents of poor behaviour in lessons have decreased substantially, students feel that too many of their lessons are subject to low level disruptive behaviour. This includes shouting out, not participating in group or pair work and playing around with classroom equipment.

Students report that bullying does exist in the school, but that it is starting to be tackled more effectively. They have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. Your use of students from every year group as 'anti-bullying ambassadors' aims to reduce bullying in the school. Your systems for recording such incidents are thorough and are helping to reduce incidences of bullying. You are also using a police officer to work with bullies and their victims to help reduce the number of bullying incidents.

The governing body has restructured its committees and meets more regularly than previously. This gives them a deeper insight into the work of the school. The governing body has also taken part in a strategic planning meeting with senior leaders to identify the key issues which will move the school to 'good' within a realistic timeframe. However, the external review of the school's use of the pupil premium has not yet been undertaken as was advised at the last inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school has been supported by an external consultant since October 2014. This consultant has worked well with senior leaders to identify existing strengths and areas for development. You have also used the expertise of a local school to strengthen the teaching of mathematics and science.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire, the Education Funding Agency and the DfE Academies Advisors Unit.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit

