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Ms Diane Stygal
Acting Headteacher
Trinity School
2 Algores Way
Wisbech
Cambridgeshire
PE13 2TQ

Dear Ms Stygal

Special measures monitoring inspection of Trinity School

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2015, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and the assistant headteacher from the Hartford site, the acting Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority. I visited classrooms at the Fenland site with the assistant headteacher there. I scrutinised a range of documentation. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, the executive headteacher has left the school. Following a period in which you provided enhanced management support, you have been appointed to the temporary position of acting headteacher for an initial period of three months. The Chair of the Governing Body has left his position and an acting Chair has been elected. A new part-time assistant headteacher has been appointed at the Fenland site. A number of changes to teaching staff have increased the proportion of qualified teachers. The local authority has applied to the Department for Education for permission to establish an Interim Executive Board to replace the governing body. Processes are in place to seek an academy sponsor for the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Both you and local authority advisers agree that the pace of improvement has been slowed by the significant leadership changes that took place during the second-half of the autumn term. Nevertheless, in a caretaking management role, you continued to build on the initial changes implemented by the executive headteacher to improve safeguarding procedures. Records of staff clearance to work in schools and evidence of their qualifications have been brought up to date. Appropriate risk assessments have been put in place while the right information has been found and staff have received relevant training. Procedures to ensure the safety of students, such as fire drills and electrical equipment testing, have been implemented and dates are identified for their review. You are monitoring the recording of serious incidents and are ensuring this meets requirements. As yet, there is no analysis of these to discern their cause and to identify actions to lessen their occurrence.

Very sensibly, you have adopted the local authority plan for improving the school as the principal plan you and the staff are working to. This sets clear expectations for improvement against tight timescales. However, to provide you with more precise goals, the criteria by which improvement is measured will be updated once the reviews of teaching and assessment data you have put in place have been completed. You have quickly introduced a programme for senior leadership meetings to ensure expectations are clear to staff at all sites and to bring greater continuity to provision.

Changes to the teaching staff include the appointment of qualified teachers of English, mathematics and science who bring increased expertise to the staff team. Using the leadership support commissioned by the local authority, you have ensured that expectations against which the quality of teaching will be measured have been made clear to all staff. An initial analysis of quality across the three sites has been

established through your work with the leader of the local teaching school alliance. While too much teaching remains inadequate, this is enabling you to identify where rapid improvement can be made and where more intense actions are required.

Staff have continued to implement the new behaviour policy introduced in September. While this is bringing about some improvement, behaviour remains a concern because the timescales over which students are expected to improve their conduct are too challenging and expectations are not consistently reinforced. Because you are monitoring the causes of exclusion carefully, the incidence has reduced significantly. Similarly, the increased attention you are giving to addressing poor attendance has resulted in the attendance of students at all three sites being on track for the targets set for improvement.

The acting Chair of the Governing Body has undertaken safeguarding training and has visited to ensure safeguarding procedures are appropriately established. The new governing body, just established at the time of inspection, has continued to provide support for the school. Because local authority intervention has led the evaluation of the school's work and provided challenge through the Local Authority Implementation Group, of which the acting Chair is a member, governors' role in challenging the school has been less evident. Some confusion over how the outcomes of these meetings could be shared with the full governing body has meant that governors have not felt fully informed about the changes made or the pace of improvement.

The local authority has continued to provide the good level of support and challenge recognised at the last inspection. The intervention plan addresses the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and brings significant levels of support to address these. Advisers have worked with the Chair of the Governing Body to appoint a new executive headteacher but two rounds of recruitment have been unsuccessful. Leadership expertise has been commissioned from a local teaching school alliance and this is very effectively supporting you to rapidly evaluate, and plan to improve, the quality of teaching. Additional support has also been provided for staff safeguarding training, auditing safeguarding provision and for developing the teaching of personal, social, health and emotional education.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the acting Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector