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23 April 2015

Mr David Waugh  
Headteacher  
Poynton High School  
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Poynton  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
SK12 1PU

Dear Mr Waugh

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Poynton High School, Cheshire East**

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 2015, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 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:

- ensure that the outcomes of the recently completed review of safeguarding conducted by local authority officers and students are fully implemented
- take steps to further improve the safety and security of access to the school site in the short term
- review and analyse any complaints and other concerns which are made known to the school so that any patterns can be determined and this information used to further build the confidence of parents and the wider community

- regularly check the school's website to ensure that it provides fully up-to-date information for parents and community members.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding and the special educational needs co-ordinator. I had a discussion with three governors including the designated governor for safeguarding and held a separate conversation with the governor who monitors special educational needs. I spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone. I observed students arriving at and departing from school, and at break and lunchtime. I spoke informally with approximately 50 students during their social time and held formal discussions with a group of eight Year 7 students and seven students with special educational needs. I made short visits to a selection of classrooms to observe students' behaviour, teaching and learning. I also examined information and advice for students displayed in the classrooms and around the school. A Year 9 tutor group completed a questionnaire to give their views about aspects of behaviour, safety and learning. I scrutinised documents including the single central record of employment checks, safeguarding and behaviour policies and logs, and information relating to the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education.

This inspection was conducted with no notice to the school.

## **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, 12 teachers have joined the school and eight have left. Reviews and restructuring of the senior leadership team, support staff and the special educational needs department including the learning support assistants have been completed. A review of teaching staffing is nearing completion.

The school has renewed its accreditation as an 'Investor in People' and is working towards recognition as a 'Rights Respecting School', for careers and for internet safety.

Changes have been made to further improve the safety of students, these include the new reception area and improvements to the vehicle access to the site. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme has been re-organised with whole 'student development' days now being used.

The governing body has been reconstituted and a review of governance completed.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher and other senior leaders have continued their drive to improve the school. They respond appropriately to urgent matters concerning, for example, the welfare and safety of students while also ensuring that the longer-term improvement

is maintained. The already good achievement is increasing further. Gaps between the progress of disadvantaged students and others, and between boys and girls are closing.

The school has received a number of complaints since the previous inspection. The school's records indicate that these, and any other complaints from parents or the wider community, are followed up carefully to ensure that issues are resolved wherever possible. However, the concerns and staff actions which result could be further analysed to ensure that any patterns are identified. This would give leaders better information as they build the confidence of parents and others in the increasing effectiveness of the school.

The arrangements for safeguarding students have been improved and are increasingly robust. Record keeping is detailed. Where students with potential vulnerability are identified, careful planning and information sharing reduces the risk of any problems developing. Students and their parents are properly involved as plans are developed. A review of safeguarding has very recently been completed. This was established by the headteacher following a complaint about the school which could have indicated that students were at higher risk. The review was led by local authority officers in partnership with students. It identified many positive aspects of the school's procedures as well as making a small number of recommendations such as increasing the security of one entrance to the site. In addition, students saw a need to have more and better information displayed in school. This would support any student with a problem by making it easier for them to know who would help. I also identified similar issues during my visit. Plans are already in place to ensure the improvements are put in place as quickly as possible.

The latest version of some safeguarding and other information was not available on the school's website at the start of this inspection. Without this, it is harder for parents to be fully informed. Leaders quickly identified this as a problem with the version of the website being displayed and it was updated. However, it is important that regular checks are made to ensure that the information available is always up to date. Safeguarding training and information is provided for all staff and governors. While the required checks are made before staff are employed, the single central record of these checks contained a few administrative errors. These were rectified during the inspection ensuring that this aspect of safeguarding met requirements.

The improvements to the support for students with special educational needs I identified in the previous monitoring visit have continued. The staff involved ensure that students' learning needs are met while they also pay due attention to any wider needs students may have. Parents who completed a recent school questionnaire recorded their very positive views about how their children are being helped. The school's approaches which involve students in contributing information on how well they are doing are being shared with other schools. The more precise details on how students can be helped are shared with all teachers. Leaders then have a clear expectation that teachers make sure all students learn rapidly.

Students generally behave well. They are friendly and courteous. I saw them working hard in class and getting on well together. School leaders ensure that students are aware of the risks of smoking and of using illegal drugs or 'legal highs'. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education has been reorganised to ensure that these risks and other important aspects are covered by each year group. However, students I talked with said that a few of their peers occasionally smoke on the school site. They also confirmed that there had been a recent incident when a very small number of students had illegal drugs in school. They indicated that this was an isolated incident. They further knew that it had been firmly dealt with by senior leaders. The school's records confirm that leaders had taken robust and decisive action. I saw no evidence of other possession or use of such substances by students in school. Students are aware of the use of drugs by members of the wider local community.

Governance has improved. The restructuring of the governing body and the review of governance recommended in the last full inspection have been completed. Governors have links with each senior leader and are therefore better able to provide challenge and support. They are prepared to take difficult decisions, for example, about finance and staffing, and in ensuring students behave well.

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

### **External support**

Leaders continue to work with colleagues from local effective schools including those from the Kyra and Silk Teaching School Alliances. Leaders have built close partnerships with other professional organisations including the local authority's safeguarding service, the local child and adolescent mental health service and the police. These make an important contribution to the safeguarding of students. These partners express confidence in the school's systems and approaches.

The work of the partnership of secondary schools in Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow has been further developed. Leaders from Poynton High School make a particular contribution in supporting effective practice in the use of the additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students. Funding has been allocated to allow Poynton High School to take the lead in establishing a centre to support students' emotional health and wellbeing; this will be a shared facility with another local school. In addition, the developing effective practice at Poynton High School in, for example, the new approaches to supporting students with special educational needs and through the student led safeguarding review is being shared with other schools.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire East and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

David Selby

**Her Majesty's Inspector**