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12 May 2015

Mr Martin Lister  
Headteacher  
Hawthorn Tree School  
Toot Lane  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE21 0PT

Dear Mr Lister

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hawthorn Tree School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 May 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- improve the quality of the school development plan by ensuring that the plan focuses more sharply on:
  - how the school will improve outcomes for the most-able pupils
  - how the school will improve outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language
  - how the governing body will support the monitoring and evaluation of leaders' actions.
- ensure that the school's website becomes fully compliant with government requirements by:
  - including a link to the accessibility plan the governing body has written in compliance with paragraph 3 of schedule 10 to the Equality

Act 2010, in the school's report on its policy for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other school leaders, and the Chair and two other representatives of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Your school improvement plan was evaluated and other school documents, including the outcomes of leaders' monitoring activities, were scrutinised. I observed children learning in their classrooms during a tour of the school.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection several members have left the governing body, including the Chair. Three new and experienced governors have joined the governing body, including a new Chair.

## **Main findings**

Your leadership team has pulled together effectively since the last inspection to move the school forwards and to begin to address the areas identified for improvement. You have prepared a detailed action plan which includes clear actions and measures to enable leaders to gauge the impact the plan makes on improving the school. However, the plan does not include enough opportunities for representatives of the governing body to check your work. The plan covers each of the areas identified for improvement at the time of your last inspection. However, the plan does not cover some of the actions you are intending to take to improve outcomes for the most-able pupils, and for those who speak English as an additional language. You agreed to revise your action plan and submit it to me electronically by the end of May 2015.

One of the key changes you have made since the last inspection has been to increase the amount of leadership time available to your senior leaders. This is helping to ensure that your leaders spend a greater proportion of their time checking the quality of teaching, and providing staff with the support they need to help them to improve. The deputy headteacher has played a key role in this work. Leaders ensure that any areas identified for improvement are re-checked to fully hold staff to account for the quality of their work.

You have worked effectively with your senior leaders to revise the school's marking policy since the last inspection. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers are complying with the new policy consistently, and that marking is making a stronger impact on accelerating pupils' progress.

You have firm plans in place to completely overhaul your school website. In the meantime, you have made significant improvements to the quality of your existing website. The site now complies with government requirements with only one exception.

Since the last inspection, governing body minutes show that governors have provided you and your leadership team with a good balance of challenge and support. Their work has been supported greatly by your adoption of a new reporting format for your headteacher's report to the governing body. The new format provides much greater detail and clarity for governors about the achievements of different groups of pupils. Several vacancies remain on the school's governing body. Governors are working hard to recruit new members. I shared information with governors during the visit about a free charity, set up by the government, to help them find governors with the skills they are looking for.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium was carried out in a timely manner following the last inspection. This has resulted in the drawing up of a clear action plan for leaders and governors, to help them to focus their resources on improving outcomes for this group of pupils. Work has already begun to implement the plan. For example, staff now track the progress of pupils supported through the pupil premium in much greater detail and have a more accurate overview of their performance.

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**

The local authority, and services working on behalf of the local authority, have provided good support to the school since the last inspection. This has included brokering partnerships with other experienced school leaders, the provision of additional funding to support staff training and development, and support in recruiting experienced governors to the school.

I have agreed to try to identify a partner school for you to work with in the region, to further support your development of provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire local authority.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**