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3 December 2015

Mrs Christine Mitchell
Headteacher
Chadwick High School
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Dear Mrs Mitchell

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Chadwick High School
(previously known as Chadwick Centre and Medical School)**

Following my visit to your school on 24 and 25 November 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 April 2015.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

The school's improvement 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 Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Drew Crawshaw
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2015

- Urgently improve the arrangements for safeguarding students in the school, by:
 - ensuring that the management committee understands its duty to keep students safe, to follow safe recruitment procedures when appointing staff and to nominate an independent committee member to hold the school to account for safeguarding
 - implementing a safeguarding policy that is specific to the needs of students in the Chadwick Centre and Medical School
 - ensuring that student absences are properly recorded in accordance with statutory requirements, rigorously followed up and that safeguarding procedures are applied where any student is at risk.
- Take immediate action to improve the leadership and management, including governance of the school sustainably, by:
 - the senior leadership and governance developing a clear and ambitious vision for the Chadwick Centre and Medical School and planning its improvement systematically, with clear milestones to be achieved within set timescales
 - implementing rigorous checks on students' progress and the quality of teaching to identify strengths and weaknesses
 - driving the improvement of students' progress and of the quality of teaching relentlessly
 - ensuring that the management committee has all the detailed information it needs to be effective in holding the school to account
 - providing teachers with high quality training and support so that they have the opportunity to teach well
 - bringing the curriculum and its assessment arrangements up to date with current requirements.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement in the Chadwick Centre and Medical School so both are at least good, by:
 - implementing a rigorous assessment of students' progress and ensuring that teachers take students' starting points into account when planning lessons so that work is matched more closely to their needs and abilities
 - ensuring that teachers and their assistants set high expectations of what students can achieve and provide greater challenge for students
 - developing students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics effectively

- ensuring that the marking policy is applied consistently by all teachers and that their advice to students is acted upon by students and followed up by the teachers.
- Improve students' behaviour and attendance, by:
 - strengthening the school's policy and procedures for managing students' behaviour and raising the expectations set by staff as to what constitutes good behaviour and an ethos of positive regard and respect for all in the school
 - setting high expectations for each student's attendance and celebrating good and improved attendance at school and to lessons.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how the impact of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 November 2015

Evidence

The inspection focused on the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, which related specifically to the school's arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils and the improvement of the leadership and management, including governance of the school.

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, the chair of the management committee, two representatives of the local authority, teachers and pupils. The inspector evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school improvement plan. The inspector scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school including leaders' self-evaluation of progress made since the recent inspection. A meeting was held with the national leader of governance who was appointed to facilitate the external review of governance. The inspector also observed learning taking place, pupils' behaviour in and around school and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work. The inspector also scrutinised the school's documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including the single central record, staff files and records of the school's safe recruitment procedures.

Context

The school has changed its name to Chadwick High School since the last inspection.

A new headteacher was appointed with effect from 1 July 2015. Since the inspection, a senior leader has returned from long-term absence. Two additional teaching assistants have been appointed to bolster the support provided to pupils. Vacancies for teachers of mathematics, English, art and food technology have been filled on a temporary basis. A further temporary vacancy, created due to the long-term absence of a middle leader, has been filled.

Since the inspection, the management committee has increased in number. Members of the management committee prefer to be called 'governors'. Three new governors have been appointed, all with senior leadership experience in mainstream schools. A member of staff has been appointed to the management committee in order to fill a vacancy. One governor has resigned since the previous inspection.

A number of changes to the school building have taken place since the inspection. Each of the two school buildings now has a number of classrooms dedicated to the teaching of core subjects. Other improvement work in and around the school has included the decoration of some classrooms and the strengthening of security

fencing. Plans for the much-needed reorganisation of the entrances to both buildings have been approved by the management committee and the local authority.

Leaders have given their consideration to the conversion of the school to an academy. The proposal for conversion to an academy has the support of the local authority. Proposed sponsors have been reluctant to work with the school due to the poor state of the school's buildings and grounds along with uncertainty related to the future use of unused neighbouring buildings. A date for conversion has not been set.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Under the strong leadership of the new headteacher the school has started to move in the right direction. Leaders have worked tirelessly on ensuring that the foundations for further improvements are solid. Systems, such as those to monitor the quality of teaching, to track pupils' progress and to record pupils' attendance accurately, have been put in place. Leaders are now able to ensure that their evaluations of the effectiveness of actions that they take to improve the school are based on a secure analysis of pupils' progress.

Safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened since the inspection. Governors have an appropriate understanding of their duty to keep pupils safe. A nominated independent governor has been appointed to hold leaders to account for safeguarding. The nominated governor meets frequently with the designated senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding. School records show that all governors have undertaken a basic level of training in safeguarding, and a suitable proportion of governors have received higher-level training along with training in the safer recruitment of staff. Scrutiny of records of recent appointments of staff shows that safer recruitment procedures are followed well.

Pupils are safe in school because robust systems to keep them safe are implemented well by all staff. Leaders have taken action swiftly to review the school's safeguarding policy. The new safeguarding policy uses the local authority's model policy effectively because it has been personalised to the specific circumstances of the school. All staff have received training in how to apply the new policy. Teachers spoken to are aware of their responsibilities with regards to specific safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, and radicalisation and extremism. During the inspection, a potential safeguarding issue was avoided because adults passed on their concerns quickly so that the designated senior leader could take appropriate action to keep a pupil safe. The inspector's observations during the inspection show that the school's implementation of the safeguarding policy is effective.

Actions taken to improve the safety of pupils as they move from one school building to another have provided a short-term solution by ensuring that there is a boundary fence around the school. However, the use of temporary fencing, along with potholes in the driveway and in the school playground and the deteriorating adjacent unoccupied former high school, are a hindrance to the school's effectiveness in raising the self-esteem of vulnerable pupils. The site as it stands is not fit for purpose.

Systems to record pupils' attendance and their absence are robust and meet statutory requirements. The school's own records show that any absences are followed up rigorously so that leaders are able to make appropriate judgements on the level of risk associated with a pupil's non-attendance. Leaders use a traffic light system effectively to quickly identify patterns in pupils' absence, and either take appropriate action themselves or alert other professionals in order to keep pupils safe. Leaders' actions to identify poor attendees, and also to recognise pupils with good attendance, are beginning to pay dividends. Although attendance overall remains poor, the proportion of pupils with full attendance over a week has more than doubled in the last few weeks compared with the first half of the autumn term.

The headteacher and other senior leaders have a strong and clear vision for the future of Chadwick High School. The school improvement plan concentrates on the actions required to move the school towards being a good school. Leaders are focused on improving the quality of teaching as the key to unlocking the potential of pupils. The inspector's observations of learning, along with his scrutiny of pupils' workbooks, show that many teachers are raising their expectations by making sure that pupils know precisely what they have done well, and are setting additional challenges so that pupils deepen their learning. As a consequence, pupils' behaviour has improved. They apply themselves better to their learning and have a greater respect for adults and one another compared with before the previous inspection.

Leaders have placed a high priority on ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have the skills necessary to meet pupils' specific needs. Weekly staff meetings are used effectively to share good practice and to raise adults' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders have established non-negotiables such as teachers' planning for lessons and their use of the school's marking policy to ensure that the basics form a solid platform for improvement. Although systems to collect information about pupils' progress and to monitor the quality of teaching are now in place, they are not yet embedded sufficiently to enable leaders to analyse accurately the impact of their actions on pupils' learning. Furthermore, the sustainability of these improvements is fragile because too many teachers are employed on a temporary basis. Leaders are aware that they need to move swiftly to increase the proportion of teachers employed on a permanent basis.

An external review of governance has taken place. Governors have worked closely with a national leader of governance to identify gaps in the management committee's knowledge, skills and understanding, and to produce a suitable action plan for improvement. A new sub-committee structure has been established. The new improvement committee has a clear mandate to focus on how effective leaders are in moving the school forward. Records of recent meetings of the management committee show that governors are beginning to challenge leaders on the effectiveness of their actions or intentions. For example, records show that in one meeting the headteacher was questioned specifically about the likely impact on pupils of her proposed changes to the school buildings. This action has set a marker by which the success of these changes can be measured, and is a green shoot of improvement in terms of the effectiveness of the management committee.

A review of the school's use of the pupil premium grant has taken place. Leaders have taken appropriate actions to begin to improve the effectiveness of pupil premium spending. For example, a suitable action plan has been drawn up, a leader has specific responsibility for reporting on the impact of pupil premium spending on pupils' progress and a nominated governor has been appointed to have responsibility for the oversight of the pupil premium. Furthermore, the inspector's scrutiny of a sample of teachers' planning for lessons shows that teachers use effectively assessment information given to them by leaders in order to plan to meet the specific needs of this group of pupils. These are early signs that the school is beginning to sharpen its use of the pupil premium grant.

External support

Leaders have made effective use of a range of external support. Leaders have worked well with the local authority to identify and appoint a permanent headteacher with a clear vision and drive to move the school forward. The local authority has provided a significant level of support for school leaders, for example through the monitoring of teaching and the identification of new governors. The local authority's statement of action indicates that this level of support will be maintained for the foreseeable future.

Leaders have begun to make effective links with other good and outstanding schools. For example, leaders have started to work with a local teaching school in order to provide coaching for teachers at Chadwick High School as a means of improving teaching. It is too early to judge the impact of these actions.

Action should be taken to

- ensure that the school's leaders work closely with the local authority to provide a school site which is fit for purpose.