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21 October 2015

Mrs Diane Stygal  
Acting Executive Headteacher  
Trinity School  
8 Station Road  
Foxton  
Cambridge  
CB22 6SA

Dear Mrs Stygal

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Trinity School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 September and 1 October 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

### **The school is taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

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

This letter and the monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of the interim executive board and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014.**

- Urgently improve the safeguarding of pupils by:
  - ensuring that all members of staff and governors are regularly trained in safeguarding and child protection, and that training is recorded
  - making sure that all the required safe recruitment checks have been carried out and recorded on the school's single central record
  - completing detailed records about all serious incidents, including where restraint is used, as quickly as possible afterwards and ensure that recommendations from fire officers visits are followed up and recorded
  - ensuring that electrical equipment testing is routinely carried out, as expected.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils in all subjects to be challenged in their learning and reach their full potential by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching
  - accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, including rigorous and regular ensuring that there is appropriate subject specialist expertise to meet the requirements of the curriculum
  - ensuring moderation of teachers' assessments with other schools
  - raising expectations and ensuring that teachers take full account of what each pupils already knows and can do so that lessons challenge them
  - improving the quality and effectiveness of marking
  - ensuring that there is a rigorous and effective approach to teaching reading, writing and spelling in all subjects.
- Improve pupils' behaviour including their attendance by:
  - ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is understood thoroughly by pupils, parents and staff, and is consistently implemented
  - ensuring that behaviour incidents are routinely analysed so that further improvement can be made in the quality of teaching and support
  - increasing attendance through setting ambitious targets, and working closely with the pupils, including those on part-time programmes, and their parents, and other agencies to achieve these.
  - reporting attendance patterns and information about behaviour, exclusions and other sanctions, and rewards routinely by governors.
- Improve the curriculum by:
  - ensuring that it is broad, and balanced and relevant for each pupil, and prepares them for their next stage of education, employment or training
  - providing high quality careers education and guidance, and work related learning

- planning and implementing provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to prepare them as well as possible for life in modern day Britain.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - rigorously monitoring important aspects of the school's work, in particular pupils' progress and their behaviour, and the quality of teaching so that leaders and managers have a thorough and accurate understanding of how well each pupil is learning
  - ensuring that this information is drawn together to provide an accurate picture of how well the school is improving with respect to ambitious targets set in the improvement plan
  - improving the effectiveness of communication of school leaders and managers with other staff so that the policies and developments are implemented and morale is improved
  - ensuring that performance management is rigorous and that targets focus especially on improving pupils' progress and behaviour
  - that expectations and responsibilities for leaders and managers at all levels are understood and met to a high standard.
- Improve governance by ensuring it has full, detailed and accurate information about the school's performance, in particular relating to targets set in the improvement plan, and with which it can hold all leaders and managers to account to provide high quality education.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess and advise how the new governing body can improve these aspects of leadership.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 30 September and 1 October 2015**

### **Evidence**

The inspector scrutinised improvement planning, assessment information, evidence from the monitoring of teaching, analysis of students' attendance including those who were not attending school at the last visit, safeguarding records, information about the work of the interim executive board members and minutes of the action plan monitoring group. She met with the acting executive headteacher, the acting assistant headteachers, a member of the interim executive board, students at the Foxton site and a representative of the local authority. The inspector spent time in classes at each of the three school sites with the executive headteacher or an assistant headteacher. She looked at teachers' planning, students' books and talked to students about their work.

## **Context**

Significant changes to staffing have continued. An acting assistant headteacher has been appointed at Hartford and five temporary teachers are employed there. The assistant headteacher at Fenland has left the school and has been replaced by the acting assistant headteacher with responsibility for assessment; two temporary teachers have been employed at Fenland and a new teaching assistant appointed. The interim executive board has continued to seek an academy sponsor for the school. A suitable sponsor has been found and applications are being made for the school to convert to academy status early in 2016.

## **Outcomes for students**

Leaders' analysis of students' progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science shows that, although they are improving overall, they remain variable because the quality of teaching differs within subjects and across the three sites. Where teaching is now strong, students in all year groups have matched or exceeded the rates of progress made by all students nationally. In some instances, students have made exceptional progress because, on a daily basis, teachers are providing activities that are well matched to their learning needs and are continuously challenging them to improve further. This improved progress is already evident this term in the amount and quality of work students have completed. In many more lessons than previously, students work hard and standards of presentation and handwriting have improved significantly. This was particularly noticeable in the English and science work of students at the Fenland site and in their science work at the Foxton site.

All students entered for GCSE examinations in 2015 achieved pass grades; for most, this demonstrated good levels of 'catch up' from their starting points. Students entered for Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications also achieved these qualifications. There is, however, evidence that not all students, particularly the most able, are challenged appropriately or that they have historically been entered for examinations that matched their academic potential.

Because students' progress is tracked in more detail and extra support is more carefully planned, the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and that of other students are closing rapidly.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Leaders are continuing to drive improvements to teaching. Using regular analysis of strengths and weaknesses, they are providing rigorous challenge and effective support to teachers. The acting assistant headteacher responsible for assessment has established expectations for assessing and marking students' work and is

monitoring teaching carefully. Because guidance is effective, it has been implemented well by most teachers. As a result, students are set challenging targets for their learning and are benefiting from regular feedback about how well they are doing, as well as good guidance about what to do next. At the Fenland site, because of strong induction procedures, a very new teacher was using these strategies well; consequently, students made rapid progress in solving mathematical problems. Where teachers are less effective, it is because of a lingering reluctance to change their practice, or because the new teachers at other sites have been less well supported to understand the expectations in place.

Teachers' planning has improved. Their plans now detail expectations of each student's learning. In most of the lessons seen, respectful relationships between staff and students mean that students feel comfortable to answer questions, explore misconceptions and use their developing literacy skills to communicate their thinking. Where planning is most effective, the learning and behavioural needs of each student are specifically addressed. Weaker teaching demands too little of students because teachers' subject knowledge is underdeveloped, the resources used to help students learn are inappropriate and expectations are too low. In these lessons, students' learning does not reflect either their ability or potential.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Leaders' records show that the incidence of poor behaviour and exclusion is reducing. This is because the new strategies introduced by the acting assistant headteacher responsible for behaviour have been quickly implemented and are being carefully and regularly monitored by time of day, type of incident, lesson and teacher. The students spoken to at Foxton said there are no more 'petty' exclusions because everyone understands the systems in place to manage behaviour, and they are given opportunities to improve even when their behaviour has started to deteriorate. Students say that leaders are 'fair' and that 'no-one yells any more'. They also say that the opportunities to earn rewards, for example their own lockers, give them good reasons to make an extra effort to behave and learn well.

Behaviour during this inspection was markedly improved on that seen at the last two visits. In all the lessons visited, students were showing increased levels of concentration and a greater involvement in their learning. Drawing on practice at the school of which the chair of the interim executive board is headteacher, a personal learning mentor has been introduced for every student. Meetings with students at the start and the end of the school day, and termly visits home by mentors, are improving communication with parents and helping students to understand the things that affect their behaviour and learning. As one student said, 'If I'm being an idiot, he'll tell me.' He also said, 'I actually try and learn now because I know I have the respect of my teachers.'

Much work has been done to analyse and address the reasons for students being registered at the school but not attending. Local authority advisers have been instrumental in supporting the acting executive headteacher to identify what these students' needs are and to improve the extent to which they are receiving their statutory entitlement to education. Despite this, there is still a very small number of students who remain vulnerable to underachievement because their needs are not fully met.

Analysis shows that attendance is improving; in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 it is currently almost in line with the national average. Attendance of students at off-site provision is monitored carefully but it is lower than that of those who attend the main school sites. Because they were not well supported during the period in which the school declined, Year 11 students are taking longer to respond to the new arrangements. Their attendance is well below the national average and their behaviour is less positive.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

Driven by the demands of the acting executive headteacher, leadership is continually strengthening. Leaders can be rightly proud of the improvements that are increasingly evident in the quality of the school's provision and in students' achievements. They also know there is a great deal still to be done to embed these changes so that the staff at each site are setting equally high expectations. Leadership responsibilities have been effectively delegated. As a result, there are good improvements in teaching, assessment and behaviour. At the Hartford site, improvement is not as evident as it is at Fenland and Foxton. A new acting assistant headteacher has been appointed who will work with the acting executive headteacher to rapidly support both new and established staff to meet the increasingly high expectations.

Leaders' action plans do not identify well enough how and when success will be measured. They do give good focus to the key areas of the school's work that still need to improve, and ongoing review provides leaders, interim executive board members and local authority advisers with useful information about the improvements being made and about what else needs to be done.

The acting executive headteacher understands the strengths and weaknesses of each site in detail. She demonstrates uncompromising determination in her work and has helped less experienced leaders to develop and use their skills confidently. Many of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. For example, safeguarding arrangements are now effective and teaching and behaviour are improving quickly.

The new acting assistant headteacher responsible for the curriculum is developing a themed approach so that subjects other than English, mathematics and science are

taught together to make learning more relevant and meaningful to students. Links have not been made to the National Curriculum so that teachers can check they are teaching students at an age-appropriate level where possible and track their progress in these and other subjects effectively.

Because of the length of time it has taken to find an academy sponsor, the interim executive board has been in place longer than was initially expected. Despite some uncertainty regarding the roles members should be fulfilling, analysis of the board's work shows that they are monitoring improvement effectively. Reports on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance are detailed and include challenging recommendations for improving these aspects of the school's work. The member of the board who leads the Discovery Teaching School Alliance has provided rigorous analysis of teaching and has given teachers good guidance on how to improve their work.

### **External support**

Leaders have used the range of effective support brokered by the local authority well to facilitate improvement. This includes the guidance of the national leader from the Discovery Teaching School Alliance, links with a mainstream school to improve teaching and the accuracy of assessment, and the vast range of experience available to support improvement through the membership of the interim executive board. Although the headteacher acknowledges that adviser support has been effective in developing her skills and understanding, too much time is now being spent reviewing and evaluating the local authority plan to support the improvement of the school. This is detracting from improving leaders' own planning and not enabling them to demonstrate their own, increasingly secure capacity to drive the improvement of the school independently.