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21 July 2016

Brian Crosby  
Executive Principal  
Canon Lee School  
Rawcliffe Drive  
Clifton Without  
York  
North Yorkshire  
YO30 6ZS

Dear Mr Crosby

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Canon Lee School**

Following my visit with Melanie Williams, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 29 and 30 June 2016, 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 that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in October 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

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

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 chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for York. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in October 2015**

- Swiftly improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least consistently good and all pupils make good progress, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - work closely matches all pupils' varying needs and abilities, including the most able, and challenges them to do better
  - staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in order to drive up achievement across all subjects
  - high standards of presentation and handwriting are expected from pupils at all times
  - incisive subject feedback is given and pupils use it well, particularly boys
  - questioning is used skilfully to check pupils' learning and to deepen their understanding
  - pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills across a wide range of subjects
  - pupils' work, and discussions in lessons, are assessed regularly to ensure they are contributing well to learning
  - teachers manage the work of teaching assistants to help them make a strong contribution to learning.
- Improve the overall achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by ensuring that:
  - subject leaders check the quality of teaching of this group of pupils and take action should it fall short of what is required to help them make good progress
  - the attendance of those who do not go to school regularly improves so they can make an effective contribution to their learning
  - the pupil premium funding is used effectively for this group of pupils to improve their achievement, especially in English and mathematics.
- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership at all levels, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - all leaders, including subject leaders, accurately assess the quality of teaching, focusing strongly on the progress pupils are making
  - all leaders promote high expectations and ambition for all pupils so that teaching is at least consistently good
  - subject leaders make sure all staff follow the school's guidance for assessment so that pupils' progress improves rapidly.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 29 and 30 June 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive principal, senior and middle leaders and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and the senior school improvement partner from the local authority. Telephone conversations were held with the assistant director and the previous executive headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised current progress information, school monitoring information and local authority monitoring documentation.

### **Context**

The school is in the process of converting to an academy under the sponsorship of the Hope Learning Trust. As part of this transition, a new executive principal was appointed on 25 June 2016. He has worked closely with the previous executive headteacher, governors, the local authority and school leaders in ensuring an effective transition. A new principal has been appointed from September 2016 and she is already working closely with the school. The deputy headteacher brought in to lead key improvements in September has been permanently appointed. An additional assistant headteacher has been appointed for September. A head of history has been appointed and new leads for science and mathematics are also in place.

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

Leaders and governors have managed the transition towards new leadership arrangements in an exemplary manner, ensuring that the momentum for improvement has been sustained while longer term strategic plans are developed. While the existing leaders have retained a strong operational focus on implementing improvement plans, new leaders are showing continuing ambition in exploring strategies for future developments. Leaders, governors and local authority members have worked in a cohesive and determined yet sensitive manner to effect change that is in the best interests of pupils and the wider school community. The leadership team has been strengthened with new appointments from outstanding schools and has a strong capacity to drive accelerated improvement from September.

Senior leaders have supported and challenged middle leaders by providing monitoring systems and modelling leadership behaviours to make them more accomplished in their roles. Middle leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching more assiduously and providing feedback to their teams, leading to improvements in teaching and the quality of work in books. They use meetings with senior leaders and their teams more efficiently to review and improve standards. One teacher described how a recent lesson observation resulted in a lower evaluation than he

typically received as he had not clearly addressed the needs of the most able. Rather than feeling undermined, he used this feedback to enhance his planning, reflecting an open willingness to improve that is shared by many at the school. In some cases, this increased challenge has led some colleagues to move on. While the school's ambition to fortify middle leadership with strong appointments is admirable, it is also important that any remaining gaps in subject leadership are filled so that the capacity for improvement can be sustained.

Leaders have developed whole-school training on key issues such as addressing the needs of pupil premium pupils, and presentation and literacy. This has led to improved planning and support for disadvantaged pupils and emerging signs of improving presentation in books. Leaders have balanced this with more customised training for individuals and departments which has involved all teachers in the improvement process. Renewed protocols are in place to support the use of teaching assistants in the classroom, although these, along with wider efforts to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not having clear impact.

Governance has remained strong at this time of change. The new chair and vice-chair have worked closely with the executive principal to check improvements and plan future developments. In weekly meetings, they have discussed key issues of staffing and finance and have been intimately involved in key leadership appointments. At a time when their role could have been diminished, it has been intensified with more clearly defined roles. Governors are supportive of further improvements, including the recruitment of a national lead for governance as chair in September 2016 who shares their ambitions for the school.

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

Improvement has continued in the quality of teaching. Teachers are planning more carefully for the differing needs of pupils within their classes, particularly disadvantaged pupils, for whom there is evidence of improving progress. At key stage 4, there is also evidence of increasing challenge for the most able pupils in English, mathematics and science, supported by more challenging and meaningful homework to extend learning. Pupils commented upon significant improvements in the quality of feedback, which is helping them to make better progress. They are also taking increasing care with the presentation of work in books.

Variations in the quality of teaching remain across subjects and year groups. At key stage 3, there is less evidence of challenge and on too many occasions pupils experience tasks that keep them busy rather than extend their learning. Planning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not as effective as that for other groups. In too many lessons, a lack of opportunities to explore concepts through discussion prevents pupils from extending their thinking, leading to a passive approach that inhibits progress.

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

The improvements in behaviour identified at the last monitoring visit have continued. Pupils have a clear understanding of the new behaviour systems which have significantly improved behaviour in lessons and across the site. This view is reinforced by staff. The increase in fixed-term exclusions that accompanied the non-negotiable standards of behaviour back in November has substantially reduced as improving standards have become more securely embedded. The increased vigilance and visibility of school leaders have supported the successful implementation of these new systems.

Actions to develop pupils' learning skills are having varying success. Pupils are showing an increasing pride in the presentation of work, although boys' work is not as well presented as that of girls. Pupils are articulate and can express themselves well when teachers enable them to discuss and share ideas, but these opportunities are irregular. New systems for improving attendance rates have led to improvements across the school and for key groups, including pupils eligible for the pupil premium and, to a lesser extent, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, these improvements have been marginal and more work is needed to ensure that no groups are disadvantaged by low attendance.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

The improving progress evident in English and mathematics in Year 11, identified in the last visit, has been sustained. The more rigorous monitoring of school standards has given increased confidence in the accuracy of assessment. Improvements have been made in science and an increasing proportion of higher ability pupils are expected to achieve top grades in 2016. Pupils are also making improving progress at key stage 3, although the picture is less certain in Year 10, partially as a result of more challenging examinations in mathematics and English.

The heightened focus on pupils receiving the pupil premium is enabling them to make much stronger progress in mathematics and English, with the overall progress gap between them and their peers in Year 11 expected to halve. The most able pupils are also making stronger progress, particularly in mathematics. While pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making improving progress in Year 11, this is not as significant at key stage 3, where they continue to make slower progress than their peers.

## **External support**

The leadership arrangements the local authority brokered in the autumn term have strongly supported the improvement process. The local authority has continued to monitor the implementation of the school's improvement plan through regular visits.

In addition, it has carried out an independent review to assess the impact of its own improvement actions. It has worked closely with leaders and has invited the new executive principal and principal to local authority improvement panel meetings to review the school's progress.