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23 November 2016

Mr Christopher Bennet  
St Peter's School  
St Peter's Road  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire  
PE29 7DD

Dear Mr Bennet

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St Peter's School**

Following my visit with David Piercy, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 1– 2 November 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in July 2016. 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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in July 2016.**

- Take urgent, effective action to ensure that the school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements are effective, by:
  - maintaining written records and supporting evidence to illustrate the actions taken to protect pupils; routinely checking these records to confirm that they are keeping pupils safe
  - ensuring that pupils who leave, or go missing from the school, receive a well-coordinated response from staff that protects them from harm
  - ensuring that senior leaders and governors responsible for child protection are more alert to the signs that pupils who go missing might be at risk of harm
  - working alongside other external agencies so that every possible action has been taken to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.
- Raise achievement by:
  - further reducing the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
  - evaluating the impact of the school's actions to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and, if necessary, amending plans to raise their achievement
  - applying the same strategies used to raise achievement in English and mathematics to raising standards in science
  - ensuring that improvements in teaching enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve well in mathematics.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 1–2 November 2016**

### **Evidence**

The main focus of this inspection was safeguarding and improvements in this area. Inspectors scrutinised documents related to safeguarding, including information about the school's work with external agencies. They also reviewed a number of pupils' case files. Inspectors also examined a number of other documents relating to leaders' work and effectiveness in the school. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff, including with teachers who are new to the profession. Inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the Cam Academy Trust, a representative from the local authority's locality team and members of the local governing body. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority safeguarding team as well as the school's external consultant. Inspectors spoke with pupils, both formally and informally. They also observed lessons where they looked at pupils' work.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the school joined the Cam Academy Trust in September 2016. The local governing body has very recently appointed a number of trustees onto its panel, including some with safeguarding knowledge and expertise.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher, ably supported by his leadership team, has responded swiftly to the issues identified in the previous inspection report related to the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher instantly directed staff to undertake essential work to ensure the safety of the small number of pupils identified as at risk in the previous inspection. The headteacher's action plan for safeguarding prioritises the correct aspects to rapidly improve the provision. Monitoring systems are rigorous and are identifying sharply where provision is improving and where more work is still required.

The trust's statement of action is closely linked to the areas identified in the previous inspection report and provides an overview of the support that it will give to the school. The plan covers both short-term and longer-term support that the leaders and governors will require in order to continue to improve standards, both in safeguarding and in achievement. While the statement of action is fit for purpose, there are some occasions where the plan could be more precise, for example in being specific about how the trust will quality assure safeguarding beyond the next two years.

Leaders have quickly implemented more rigorous systems for recording vital information about how pupils are kept safe. Pupils' case files have been rapidly reviewed, reorganised and overhauled. These files, alongside central tracking systems, are now more effectively monitoring the work of the school to safeguard pupils. The headteacher has also increased the size of the school's safeguarding team and has put in place key workers for vulnerable pupils. Leaders have identified that further support is still required to ensure that they can keep case files up to date as rapidly as is required for the extensive caseload that they face. Leaders are in the process of appointing a member of staff to support this work. Leaders acknowledge that they need to ensure that this workload is delegated as effectively as it can be, within the safeguarding support team.

Staff now receive safeguarding training monthly that is tailored to the needs of pupils in the school. Following the areas identified in the previous inspection, leaders continually re-emphasise the potential risks to pupils who are persistently absent from education. Most staff are confident in the referral process and use it effectively. Staff are using training to make better-quality referrals when they are concerned about pupils. However, a few non-teaching staff, while clear on the signs of abuse and whom to report it to, do not always complete the written referrals and rely on the safeguarding staff to do so on their behalf.

Leaders' work with the local authority is now far more tenacious in taking every possible action to ensure that pupils who are missing from education are safe. Leaders are resolute that the safeguarding of pupils is paramount, despite the detrimental effect that some of this work is having on the school's overall attendance figures. Governors are beginning to have a greater role in supporting and challenging leaders over this aspect of their safeguarding work, although this is still developing.

The single central register of staff recruitment checks is fully maintained and now meets requirements. Inspectors found that the school did not record the new section 128 check (the check that ensures that leaders, managers and trustees are not prohibited from managing the school) on the single central record of staff recruitment. However, this was rectified quickly while inspectors were on site.

In response to the previous inspection report, the headteacher has recently sought an external evaluation of the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils, including how it utilises its funding. Leaders are using this recent analysis to begin to embed a more scrupulous analysis of their own impact. Governors now need to use this information to challenge leaders more thoroughly on disadvantaged pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour in all year groups.

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

Leaders are maintaining the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment highlighted in the previous inspection. Leaders' monitoring continues to be rigorous, and the small residue of weaker teaching is being supported to improve. New line management in science is tackling underperformance relentlessly.

The previous inspection highlighted that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities needed support in mathematics to make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator and leader in mathematics have worked to ensure that teachers are more skilled in meeting the very specific needs of pupils. The trust's mathematics adviser and 'maths hub' are also helping to support the school to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding, and, consequently, their classroom work. Teachers in mathematics are providing support that is becoming increasingly effective in ensuring that these pupils' misconceptions are addressed so that they can learn more effectively.

Despite the best efforts of leaders, recruitment of teachers to science remains a challenge. Pupils do not experience enough permanent and/or high-quality teaching currently to be able to close the gaps in their knowledge from previous weaker teaching. The trust has initially provided part-time consultancy support through a specialist leader of education. However, the trust acknowledges that, as a matter of urgency, it needs to build the teaching capacity in science to ensure that pupils do not continue to be disadvantaged by temporary or weaker teaching.

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

The previous inspection report identified some strengths in personal development and welfare, and many strengths in behaviour. Leaders are maintaining these strengths while making the vital improvements to their safeguarding processes.

Pupils behave well in lessons, are keen to learn and show pride in their work. Most act on the advice and guidance given by their teachers, and can explain how they are developing skills and increasing their knowledge.

Pupils move around the site appropriately, even where space is sometimes more cramped. The building is awash with examples of pupils' work and celebrations of their success. For example, the sixth-form destinations board in the school reception area identifies the many post-18 destinations of the pupils who left in the summer 2016.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and in the wider community, through a well thought out curriculum. The assistant headteacher and his team review this curriculum meticulously to ensure that pupils in all year groups access a broad range of information. Pupils speak highly of personal development learning sessions (PDLS) which are being constantly reviewed and adapted to meet their changing needs.

A small number of pupils now attend the school's own alternative provision (AP) unit on site, where they access hairdressing, engineering and sports, alongside the traditional academic studies of mathematics, English and science. While a few of these pupils do not yet access full-time provision, leaders work closely with the local authority locality team to ensure that these pupils are safe when not in the school, and to increase their integration to full-time education as quickly as possible. Leaders' reorganisation of the curriculum is allowing these pupils to have access to options which are not only well suited to their aspirations and interests but also provide the necessary social and emotional support that these pupils require in order to succeed.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The progress of Year 11 pupils in 2016 was broadly in line with others nationally. Although results are not directly comparable, it is clear that pupils made better overall progress from their various starting points than in the previous few years. This is most notable in the numbers of pupils achieving A\* to C grades in English and mathematics. Results in a number of subjects improved, including in mathematics, English, history, geography and modern foreign languages.

In 2016, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in a number of subjects were better than in previous years. However, they could still make better progress from their various starting points. Leaders have identified this as a continued area for improvement in their action planning. They have recently commissioned an external review of their provision for disadvantaged pupils and how they are spending their funding. However, it is too early to see the impact of this review.

Pupils' achievement in science is still too low. As predicted by leaders, results in the single and double science awards fell in 2016. Although the most able pupils achieved well in the triple science qualifications, science remains a key focus for leaders' action plans.

The 2016 results for pupils who were in Year 13 continued to show improvement in both the academic and vocational outcomes. More pupils than ever before went onto university, while increasing numbers successfully secured places on high-quality apprenticeships. Many pupils who resat GCSE examinations achieved at least a grade C in their resit of English and/or mathematics. Almost all pupils went on to further education, training or employment.

## **External support**

Leaders and staff continue to access support from other schools in the trust, particularly in mathematics and science. The trust's director of education has undertaken some initial review work of the school, including its work in safeguarding.

The local authority has provided effective support since the previous inspection. It has undertaken routine audits of the school's safeguarding provision, especially reviewing pupils' case files. This support has been instrumental in improving the quality of the school's recording and reporting systems.

The school uses an external consultant to undertake regular reviews of its provision and to support senior leaders to raise standards. The most recent work has been around the effectiveness of leaders in raising standards for disadvantaged pupils. This will be a particular focus in the next monitoring inspection.