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Mr Martin McKeown
Headteacher
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Dear Mr McKeown

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

Following my visit to your school on 28–29 November 2017, 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 that 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 March 2017.

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 improvement 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 board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that teachers use information about pupils' attainment and progress and have high expectations of what they can achieve in order to provide work that is appropriately challenging
 - developing the quality of teachers' questioning, so that pupils' thinking is challenged so that they develop a deeper understanding of the topics that they study.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and governors routinely evaluate pupil premium expenditure so that it is spent on activities that improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they can improve the quality of teaching in their subjects
 - strengthening the role of governance so that school leaders are effectively supported and held to account
 - strengthening the leadership of post-16 provision and special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - making sure that school leaders closely track and monitor the work that they do to check that their actions are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use the school's assessment policy to give effective feedback to pupils so that they are clear about what they have to do to improve their learning.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - further reducing the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions to be consistently in line with or below national averages.
- Improve students' progress in 16 to 19 study programmes so that it is at least good by ensuring that leaders make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching to ensure that it is appropriately challenging.

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 pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 28–29 November 2017

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents. He visited lessons in the main school and in the sixth form, and held brief discussions with some pupils about their learning. The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff with leadership responsibilities, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), a member of the teaching staff and members of the governing body, which is also the board of trustees. On this visit, the inspector focused on the actions taken at the school to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Context

Since the inspection, senior leadership roles and responsibilities have been restructured. Several positions in the senior leadership team and among other leadership roles have been filled with people new to the roles since the inspection.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The rate of progress so far towards the removal of special measures has been good. The senior leaders have worked rapidly since the inspection to deal with the areas for improvement that were identified. They have set clear and sensible priorities for tackling the issues identified by the inspectors.

The senior leaders drew up a comprehensive and detailed action plan quickly that focuses unequivocally on the areas for improvement. They have used the plan well as a mechanism for turning ideas into action. As a result, there is already evidence of important improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The senior leaders have shown drive and determination in dealing with the inspection's outcome. They have been very successful in conveying that attitude and a strong sense of purpose to the staff. The subject and other leaders of the school have responded well to that lead and show equal determination.

Roles and responsibilities have been clarified at all levels and revised to ensure that everyone understands what is expected of them. The leadership team for the sixth form has been expanded, so that there is more capacity to make the required improvements. The subject and other leaders feel more able now to fulfil their roles. As a result, the staff receive clear messages about what they are expected to do. They, too, are responding determinedly to the areas for improvement. The school's response to the inspection is a concerted effort.

A new SENCo has taken up the post very recently. He is bringing a fresh perspective, a clear sense of priorities and new ideas to the role that offer the

prospect of better provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. He has brought greater prominence throughout the school to meeting the needs of these pupils. Practical improvements to the provision are still at an early stage of development.

The external review of the school's use of the pupil premium has not taken place. The senior leaders have convincing reasons why that is so. They have completed some exploratory work in preparation for a review, but the review now needs to be completed quickly.

The initial work on the external review of governance recommended at the inspection in March 2017 has been completed. The governing body was due to receive the outcomes imminently at the time of this monitoring visit. That means that, to date, it has not been able to discuss the recommendations and there has been no discernible outcome from the review. This process needs to be completed quickly to enable the governing body to focus on the strategic direction of the school.

The senior leaders have rapidly put into practice systematic and effective ways of checking on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment. Sometimes, this has meant simply using existing approaches routinely and more thoroughly. Sometimes, they have made use of new techniques. The process has provided senior, subject and other leaders with detailed information. The leaders are using the information productively in discussions with the staff. The discussions are leading to more consistency in the quality of teaching than was evident at the last inspection. The leaders have ensured that more emphasis has been given to the sixth form than previously.

Using some often quite simple mechanisms, the discussions between leaders and the staff are better informed and more focused on the quality of teaching, assessment and learning. The subject and other leaders have noted a significant increase in the number of teachers seeking opportunities to find out about ways to improve and to share what they know with each other. The benefits are becoming apparent in lessons.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The senior and other leaders have made improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment their top priority. They have ensured that the staff are using whole-school policies much more consistently than before the inspection. The policies include approaches for planning lessons, for using information about the pupils' progress and for commenting on the pupils' work, including in the sixth form. The teachers are making good use of the tools that they have been given.

The sixth form leaders have increased the entry requirements for students applying for A-level courses. The students are more likely now to have the prior knowledge,

skills and understanding needed to make good progress on those courses.

In lessons, the inspector saw the teachers use questions thoughtfully to identify what the pupils had learned. The teachers responded to the pupils' answers by correcting misconceptions or reinforcing a learning point. Occasionally, the questions were posed in a way that made the pupils think carefully about a subject. Less frequently, the teachers used supplementary questions designed to make the pupils think even more deeply, to consider alternative answers or to explore the answers provided by the pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The pupils' attendance improved in 2017, including for disadvantaged pupils. Improvements in the management of pupils' behaviour have led to fewer exclusions. The students' attendance in the sixth form has improved as well, along with their punctuality.

Outcomes for pupils

In 2017, the school achieved its best-ever results in GCSE and other examinations at the end of key stage 4. For the first time in recent years, the pupils made at least the progress that was expected, given their starting points. Generally, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than their peers at the school and better progress than other pupils nationally.

External support

The school is notably and commendably outward looking. The senior leaders have sought out and made effective use of a broad range of sources of support for staff training and professional development. They have brought in and made good use of a range of experienced advisers and consultants, including from the local authority, to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses at the school.