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Mrs Christine Mitchell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mitchell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chadwick High School

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 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 April 2015. 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 appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The school may appoint up to one newly qualified teacher.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter and monitoring inspection report 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 pupils in the school, by:
 - ensuring that the management committee understands its duty to keep pupils 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 pupils in the Chadwick Centre and Medical School
 - ensuring that pupil absences are properly recorded in accordance with statutory requirements, rigorously followed up and that safeguarding procedures are applied where any pupil 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 pupils' progress and the quality of teaching to identify strengths and weaknesses
 - driving the improvement of pupils' 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 pupils' progress and ensuring that teachers take pupils' 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 pupils can achieve and provide greater challenge for pupils
 - developing pupils' 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 pupils is acted upon by pupils and followed up by the teachers.

- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by:
 - strengthening the school's policy and procedures for managing pupils' 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 pupil'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 third monitoring inspection on 29 June 2016

Evidence

This one-day inspection focused on the key findings identified in the inspection of April 2015 which related to the leadership and management of the school and the behaviour and safety of pupils. The inspector focused specifically on the reasons why the school was judged to require special measures. The inspector also evaluated the school's progress towards completing the additional actions to be taken identified at the last monitoring inspection.

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also scrutinised a report, provided by the national leader of governance, which summarised actions taken to improve governance of the school. The inspector observed learning taking place and pupils' behaviour in and around school, and scrutinised pupils' work. Some of the inspector's observations were made jointly with the deputy headteacher.

The inspector also scrutinised the school's documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including the single central record.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, experienced teachers of English and art have taken up their posts on a full-time and permanent basis. There remains a vacancy for a mathematics teacher; this post is filled currently by a supply teacher. The additional administration assistant, appointed prior to the last monitoring inspection, has taken up her post. A teaching assistant has been appointed to fill a vacancy.

Since the last monitoring inspection, three governors have resigned from their positions on the management committee. Three new governors, each with a wealth of experience and expertise relevant to the needs of Chadwick High School, have been appointed.

The school comprises two main buildings. Building work to reorganise the entrances to both buildings has been completed and these are fully operational on both sites.

There has been no movement with regard to the conversion of the school to academy status.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

In nearly all respects, the effectiveness of leadership and management has improved. The headteacher's level-headed approach towards ensuring an appropriate balance between academic progress and the care and welfare of this group of vulnerable pupils is beginning to pay dividends. For example, the school's

records show a significant increase in the proportion of Year 11 pupils sitting and completing external examinations compared with previous years. This improvement is a direct result of the adults' understanding of, along with their willingness to meet, pupils' specific needs. It is too early, though, to judge the impact of these actions on the outcomes of pupils.

Governance of the school has improved as a result of the recruitment of experienced and committed governors since the inspection in April 2015. Governors have strategic link roles so that they can monitor progress and drive improvement in key aspects of the school's work. For example, one experienced governor has been appointed as the literacy governor. Recent meetings between the literacy governor and the literacy lead have resulted in improvements in reading across the school. The inspector's discussions with leaders and pupils showed that pupils read more frequently than they did before the inspection in April 2015. The headteacher and literacy lead plan to expand the use of reading areas to all classrooms, which are also form rooms.

The potency of the governing body has been bolstered by ensuring governors' skills, knowledge, understanding and experience are matched well to their respective roles as part of the management committee. The inspector's scrutiny of the records of a recent management committee meeting, along with his discussions with governors and the senior school improvement officer, show that the level of challenge to leaders has increased markedly compared with before the inspection in April 2015. For example, records show that there is now a clear focus on the impact of the spending of pupil premium grants, the safeguarding of pupils and understanding the views of pupils when governors meet together. Governors are beginning to build their own view of the school's progress because they increasingly spend time observing the school's work.

Checks made by leaders on pupils' progress and on teaching are accurate. Leaders have used their strong links with other local schools and the local authority to ensure that teachers and support staff have a secure understanding of how the progress of pupils at Chadwick compares with that of pupils in mainstream schools. Leaders observe learning frequently and give feedback on how teaching can be improved. Leaders' records and the inspector's observations during previous monitoring visits show that the quality of teaching has improved since the inspection in April 2015.

Safeguarding arrangements have continued to improve since the previous monitoring inspection. The inspector's scrutiny of the school's record of suitability checks shows that all governors have been vetted appropriately. Furthermore, the whereabouts of pupils who attend off-site alternative provision on a part-time basis are monitored closely by the school. The school's system to alert the appropriate people when a pupil is absent from school or from alternative provision is followed closely by those responsible for pupils' attendance. Consequently, pupils are kept as safe as practicably possible when they are not in school.

Uncertainty remains about the future development of the school site and also that of the adjacent former school building. As a result, there is a temporary feel to the school. This does not support the building of pupils' self-esteem and hinders improvements in the overall effectiveness of the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

During this inspection, the inspector saw no incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils were polite and well-mannered throughout the inspection. During his visits to classrooms, the inspector saw signs that pupils' attitudes towards learning were improving, particularly in those pupils who had been at Chadwick for more than a term. For example, pupils who momentarily lost concentration responded swiftly to the direction and support given by adults and quickly returned to the task in hand. In these instances, improvements in behaviour were contributing to improvements in the rates of pupils' progress.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are continuing to improve. Pupils spoken to had a clear desire to learn and make progress. For example, pupils in key stage 4 either had a realistic idea of what they wanted to do when they left school or understood the need to gain decent grades in order to allow them to make choices later. This is an improvement compared with before the inspection in April 2015.

Improvements in learning and attitudes to learning continue to be hindered by overall attendance, which remains low at the school. Leaders have a robust strategy to improve attendance and are able to point to individual pockets of success. However, more still needs to be done to identify groups of pupils so that actions to improve their attendance can be matched closely to their specific needs. Leaders are aware that communicating effectively to pupils the link between academic success and low levels of absence is a key factor in boosting attendance.

Improvements to the school's two entrances, reported at the last monitoring inspection, have been strengthened further with improvements in signage around the school. Visitors are left in no doubt about how they enter the school appropriately. The safety of pupils has been enhanced also by the addition of a lockable entrance gate in order to deter members of the public from entering the site unintentionally or unannounced.

The removal of a wooden climbing frame at the time of the previous inspection has resulted in pupils having an appropriate open space in which to play and exercise. This is an improvement. Leaders are working with the local authority to rectify the damaged safety matting in the playground in order to eradicate potential trip hazards.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching has continued to improve. This is a direct result of the appointment of well-qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants.

The expectations that teachers and their assistants have of pupils are beginning to show signs of improvement, particularly in terms of the amount and quality of work pupils should produce and the level of challenge the work presents. The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' work books in mathematics, for example, showed that Year 10 pupils were building on their prior learning and in a small proportion of instances working towards higher level GCSE grades.

Pupils' starting points are assessed rigorously. The school uses effectively a commercial package to assess pupils' prior attainment and to monitor their progress towards appropriate targets. However, leaders are aware that still more needs to be done to ensure that all teaching matches closely pupils' specific needs and interests in order to boost pupils' rate of progress further.

Outcomes for pupils

The inspector visited Lancashire Training Services (LTS) to assess the impact of the school's use of alternative provision on pupils' outcomes. Five pupils from Chadwick currently attend LTS on two days of each week. LTS provides vocational training related to the motor vehicle industry, in a thoroughly organised and safe environment. Pupils who attend LTS work towards entry level and level 1 qualifications. This experience is contributing effectively to pupils' development of their work-related skills and their preparation for life beyond school.

External support

Leaders have continued to use appropriately their links with other local schools and the local authority in order to improve the overall effectiveness of the school.