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Mr B Carr  
Headteacher  
The Pingle School  
Coronation Street  
Swadlincote  
DE11 0QA

Dear Mr Carr

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of The Pingle School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 January 2013 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please thank the Chair of the Governing Body and fellow governor for taking the time to talk to me, and the students for their help during my visit.

Since the previous inspection, three teachers have left. The information and communication technology (ICT) department has a new head of department. Three new teachers and two newly qualified teachers have been appointed. The school is no longer a specialist school for ICT.

As a result of the inspection on 29 May 2012, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

At the end of Key Stage 4, the school's 2012 unvalidated data show a decrease from 46% in 2011 to 41% in the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades in both English and mathematics. While results remain above the government's minimum expectation, the school is aware that not all its students made expected progress in English and/or mathematics. The progress of students in history improved and was in line with the national average.

The recently introduced data collection system is beginning to provide the school with reliable data. The school tracks and monitors the progress of all groups of students and of individuals. As a result, interventions are increasingly effective and

more carefully matched to students' needs than they were before. The school has identified groups of students who benefit from extra support with grammar, spelling and punctuation and who are encouraged to read regularly to an adult. Extra time has been found to support students who have weaknesses in English and mathematics. Dedicated mentors give them targeted support in these subjects. The senior leadership team and the other members of staff provide general mentoring support to another group of students. The school's data analysis predicts that students at the end of Key Stage 4 will achieve better results this summer than they did in 2012.

The specialist units continue to cater well for the needs of those students who have a wide range of complex learning needs.

There is a marked improvement in students' behaviour. A new behaviour policy explains clearly the high expectations for students' behaviour and these are reflected in equally high expectations of staff. The management of behaviour is consistent. Well-thought-through sanctions ensure staff tackle incidents of low-level disruption more effectively. Two experienced non-teaching behaviour managers carefully monitor students' behaviour and work well with individual students and their families. The school has also recently introduced an on-line 'button' which students can use anonymously to report low-level disruption and bullying. Students stated to the inspector that low-level disruption was less frequent. In the autumn term, detentions reduced by 41% and there was a reduction in behaviour points of 81% compared with the same time last year. Reward points have correspondingly increased by over 100%. The inspector's tour of the school at lunchtime and change of lessons found a calm and purposeful atmosphere, in spite of the snow. Students ate lunch and chatted sensibly in the canteen; supervision was unobtrusive. They are courteous and considerate towards everyone. Students' attendance and punctuality have improved. Appropriate changes have been made to the school day to improve students' engagement with learning. Lessons begin promptly at the beginning of the day and form time now takes place at the end.

The teaching observed during the inspection required improvement; in some lessons it was good. Lessons commence promptly and there is an increasingly positive climate for learning. Teachers are gaining confidence in implementing new teaching strategies so that activities better engage students. The subject ambassadors, students who have been trained to feed back students' views about their learning and lessons, stated that teaching was improving. They reported that teachers helped them to understand their work better through, for example, more group discussion. In the lessons observed, teachers had good relationships with students. Teachers are beginning to reinforce grammar, spelling and punctuation in all subjects. They are beginning to use the school's student data information to match work better to students' starting points. Learning also is more challenging for higher attainers, but questioning does not always encourage students to explain their thinking. Students stated that their books are marked regularly and positive comments encourage them to persevere with their learning. However, written feedback does not always identify

next steps in their learning. Similarly, while students reported that they knew their targets, they could not always explain what they needed to do to achieve a higher grade.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff are working with determination to improve the quality of education for their students. Training has been used effectively to increase staff confidence through the sharing of good practice and this has had a particularly good impact on improving weaker teaching. Monitoring and evaluation systems have been tightened up to ensure that leaders and managers at all levels have a secure view of the quality of teaching and students' progress. The role of middle managers has been developed and they quality assure the work of their departments. As a result, all staff are held to account for the progress of students. Some staff have successfully developed a coaching role in the school. Any member of staff who would like to develop an aspect of their teaching can contact a 'coach' via email. Teaching and learning are regularly included on the agendas of all department and whole-staff meetings. Maintaining the focus on this priority is encouraging all staff to share the school's good practice.

The support provided by the local authority is effective because it has been carefully planned with the senior team to meet the needs of the school. The local authority's action plan is fit for purpose because it provides a clear and measurable set of actions linked to the school's needs and it is implemented effectively.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012**

- Raise standards, especially in English and mathematics, so that students make at least expected progress by:
  - using performance data to identify students whose performance is falling below expectations
  - carrying out timely intervention to support those students
  
- Improve the quality of teaching so that by May 2013:
  - all teaching is at least satisfactory and a substantial proportion is good or better
  - teachers make greater use of tasks that actively involve students in their learning and are well matched to their ability.
  
- Further reduce low-level disruption by ensuring the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently.
  
- Develop the effectiveness of middle managers as leaders of learning.