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10 June 2015

Mr Christopher Terry  
Principal  
Witchford Village College  
Manor Road  
Witchford  
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Dear Mr Terry

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Witchford Village College**

Following my visit to your school on 9 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the approaches taken to monitor and improve teaching and behaviour so that all lessons match the quality of the best.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the vice-principals responsible for teaching and learning and for behaviour and student support, the mathematics department lead and deputy lead and the Chair of the Governing Body with the governor responsible for monitoring the use of the pupil premium. A range of school documentation was evaluated including, the action plan, procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and students' work and student achievement information. We

visited classes throughout the school together, I met with a group of students and scrutinised mathematics books belonging to students in Years 9 and 11.

## **Context**

Since the inspection, a mathematics teacher has left the school and staffing in the department has been increased to provide small focus group teaching to support students to keep up with the pace of learning.

## **Main findings**

'No child left behind' is the vision you have promoted to raise expectations of all staff since the inspection. Working closely with the vice-principals you have implemented more focused action plans with tight timescales by which you expect improvements to be achieved. For some of the actions, the indicators of success lack the clarity necessary to enable leaders and governors to measure progress rigorously enough. Nevertheless you have made a number of changes that are already making a difference to students' learning and behaviour.

Students' behavioural and learning needs are becoming better understood and managed. All the staff are working together more effectively under the leadership of you and the vice-principals to improve behaviour in lessons, to improve marking and to increase the extent to which the monitoring of teaching shows how well teachers use their specific subject knowledge to move students learning on. More responsibility has been placed on the former heads of year who, as progress leaders, are now accountable for monitoring the progress made by the students they are responsible for.

Procedures for reviewing the work of subject departments include a greater focus on lesson observation and scrutiny of students' work. Reviews have already taken place with the modern foreign languages and the mathematics departments. These have resulted in extra support and challenge being provided to middle leaders. For example, by improving the management of achievement data in the modern foreign languages department.

Mathematics leaders have implemented more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching, particularly of the challenge teachers are making to students in their lessons. Feedback to teachers is not yet specific enough to ensure improvement is rapid. More opportunities have been implemented to engage students in mathematical investigations to increase their confidence and to develop their reasoning skills.

Assessment information is used carefully to track students' achievement. Information shared by the school and the students' work seen, suggests that students are making progress that is at least in line with their peers nationally and so are on track to achieve outcomes in English and mathematics that show an improvement on those of 2014. The monitoring of the behaviour and learning of disadvantaged

students is very detailed, consequently appropriate support can be identified to help them catch up with their peers. Because students' overall achievement is improving, the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers is not closing rapidly.

Systems for managing behaviour have been changed following a review that took account of students' views. As a result, behaviour is improving because teachers use the procedures more consistently. Rewards to promote a better attitude to learning are successful in motivating students. As a result, students report that they appreciate the improvement to behaviour in lessons and are learning more.

Governors have requested that they receive more frequent reviews of assessment information so they can understand how well achievement is improving across the college. The chairs of committees meet more regularly and have altered the structure of their meetings to ensure greater rigour in the challenge they make to leaders. Through their monitoring they have a good understanding of the impact of the use of extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils and a growing knowledge of the quality of teaching across the school.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Leaders and staff are working with other local schools effectively to ensure teachers' assessments are accurate. You are also developing a programme of support with an outstanding secondary school to increase the speed and breadth of improvement. You carefully use the monitoring undertaken by an external consultant to bring extra challenge to your own analysis and evaluations.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

cc. Chair of the Governing Body  
cc. Local authority