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Miss Claire Patton  
Executive Headteacher  
Ashwell Academy  
Snowdon Way  
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Hull  
HU7 5DS

Dear Miss Patton

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ashwell Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2017, 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 March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further and urgent action to:

- strengthen plans to ensure that they are sharply focused on what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning and identify the impact actions are intended to have on pupils' achievement, behaviour and personal development
- ensure that checks on the quality of the school's work lead to an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses and that findings are shared with governors and used to improve consistency and drive continual improvement
- agree a programme of intervention with the trust to strengthen leadership and ensure that the school improves.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher, all teaching staff and the chair of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I observed pupils' arrival to school and a breakfast session. I visited lessons, met with pupils and looked at a sample of their English, mathematics and humanities books. The school's improvement plan was evaluated and I reviewed school information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour.

## **Context**

The principal and an assistant headteacher are currently absent and a vice principal left the school in December 2016. An assistant headteacher is managing the school in addition to their teaching responsibilities. In the last few weeks, an executive headteacher from Bridgeview Whitehouse and medical needs centre, and a headteacher from The Boulevard Centre are providing additional leadership support for two days a week.

## **Main findings**

Effective systems for checking on teaching, pupil progress and the implementation of the behaviour policy have not been introduced despite this being a priority. School plans lack specific actions, timescales and measures needed to secure improvement in learning and progress or to help pupils to take responsibility for managing their behaviour. Teachers are not clear about what is expected of them, the pace of improvement needed or the school's priorities for development.

Leaders' and governors' intention to secure improvements as quickly as possible is laudable, but they have not established a vision and clear direction for the school. Leadership is not sufficiently developed at senior level and throughout the school to provide a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance, behaviour and attendance. Governors have been slow to tackle leaders about these concerns. However, governors have acted more swiftly in recent weeks and have ensured that temporary leadership arrangements are in place during the principal's absence. Staff welcome the support and drive that you have brought to the school. The higher expectations of pupils' behaviour that you and your fellow headteacher have, and your presence in and around the building at change of lessons are helping to restore calm as pupils move around the school.

Additional testing for pupils, introduced as part of the admissions process, is resulting in more information about pupils' starting points, but it is not always used well enough to plan learning programmes or support for pupils. Variation in the quality of teaching and learning remain, and stronger practice within the school has not been systematically shared across the teaching team. The pupils' books, examined during this inspection, showed a lack of challenge and depth to written

work and mathematics, especially for those who enter the school with high prior attainment. For those pupils with low prior attainment, often very little work was evident to justify the assessments staff made.

In lessons, activities are not always purposeful and pupils are not clear what they are expected to learn or, sometimes, what they are expected to do. This frustrates and unsettles some pupils, who become aggressive and disrupt learning.

Overall, attendance is low. The school cannot demonstrate that pupils are getting the right support to improve their attendance.

### **External support**

Very recent actions by governors to commission the assistance of two leaders from outstanding local schools is a very positive step taken in the interest of pupils, parents and staff. It is too early to see the impact of their work. Links with Venn Academy Trust have been established but a programme of intervention has yet to be agreed. Overall, not enough has been done to strengthen leadership and bring about improvement since the last section 5 inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**