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28 September 2016

Ms Katie McGuire  
Oasis Academy Nunsthorpe  
Sutcliffe Avenue  
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North East Lincolnshire  
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Dear Ms Katie McGuire

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Nunsthorpe**

Following my visit with Peter Heaton, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 14–15 September 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 that have been taken since the academy'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 February 2016.

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 academy's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2016.**

#### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise standards for all groups of pupils by:
  - immediately raising teachers' expectations of pupils' progress in lessons and over time
  - planning work which pupils find interesting and challenging so as to improve their concentration and attitudes to learning
  - ensuring that the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are taught consistently well in all classes, including in the early years
  - consistently implementing the new policy for marking to provide feedback to pupils so they can improve their learning
  - improving the impact of teaching provided by teaching assistants
  - using the school's recently developed assessment information to match work accurately to the abilities of pupils and ensure that gaps in learning are eliminated
  - developing teachers' questioning skills to better probe pupils' understanding and extend their thinking
  - adapting teaching within lessons to respond promptly to pupils' identified learning needs.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - increasing the rigour of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school
  - fully implementing the school's recently created action plan to improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and pupils' outcomes
  - embedding the newly reviewed roles and responsibilities of senior leaders and subject leaders of English and mathematics
  - developing the curriculum to better meet pupils' needs and ensure a balanced coverage in English, mathematics and science
  - developing the skills of subject leaders to be able to check the impact of initiatives and to measure this against national comparators
  - improving leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they make at least good progress
  - developing leadership in early years, including ensuring that assessments are accurate in the Nursery and Reception classes.

- Improve the personal development, behaviour and well-being of pupils by:
  - improving behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes and eradicating bullying
  - analysing the school's exclusions, accidents and bullying information effectively and acting upon the findings.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 14 September 2016 to 15 September 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive principal, the principal, the regional director of the academy trust, senior and middle leaders and members of the academy council. They looked at pupils' work in books and observed 15 parts of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils in a meeting at lunchtime and around school.

### **Context**

The school has been supported by an executive principal who is principal of a better performing school within the Oasis academy trust. A new principal has been recruited to lead the school from September 2016. Since the inspection, several middle leaders have been appointed, including new leaders for reading, writing, mathematics and special educational needs. The trust has appointed five new teachers, of whom three are newly qualified teachers. Seven teachers have left the school.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leaders have worked with focus and determination to complete intentions determined in the trust's statement of action. Leaders are open and honest in their appraisal of the school. As a result, many initial actions have been completed, effectively setting the scene for a trajectory of improvement.

Leaders have engendered a sense of team spirit among staff, promoting an open culture which, in turn, is helping them to overcome barriers to improving their teaching.

More robust systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the school are now in place and training and coaching is beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching. More pupils are now making good progress than in the past and greater numbers of pupils are working at levels expected for their age.

There have been substantial changes to leaders' roles since the previous inspection. Many middle leaders are new to role, including those responsible for literacy, mathematics and special educational needs. Although inexperienced, middle leaders have a good idea about the strengths and weaknesses within their subjects. Literacy leaders acknowledged that although much has been done to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and writing, the teaching of reading needs to improve further so that pupils can achieve more. Middle leaders feel valued and part of the leadership of the school. They have a good grasp of

what needs to improve, but as they are new to role, they are not yet able to demonstrate the impact of their work.

A review of pupil premium spending took place in May 2016. Senior leaders quickly drew up an action plan to address areas for improvement. A pupil premium 'champion' has been recruited from the staff to monitor the effectiveness of provision for disadvantaged pupils. She is very new in role and has yet to have an impact on the quality of provision, teaching and learning for disadvantaged pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

As a result of senior leaders' stalwart focus on improving the quality of teaching, there is evidence that both teaching and the rate of pupils' learning is getting better. By the end of 2015/16, school assessment information and work in pupils' books shows that progress was stronger in writing and in mathematics than in the past. Where teaching is good and where work is set at an appropriate level, pupils are actively engaged and learning well. In these classes, pupils are productive and moving on rapidly.

However, teaching is not consistently strong across all year groups and all subjects because some teachers have not planned activities that are well matched to the abilities of their pupils. When teachers have not taken into account how pupils might learn effectively, the pace of lessons slows down and pupils lose concentration and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Some teachers' suggestions are not picked up on by pupils, showing that the marking policy is not yet consistently embedded. In some lessons, teachers are providing pupils with timely comments and feedback that is helping them to understand their learning better. In these lessons, teachers quickly assess how well pupils have understood and are moving them to the next task quickly and seamlessly so that no learning time is lost. In a minority of lessons, teachers are not spotting when pupils have completed their work and are no longer working. Marking in books shows that some teachers are providing clear guidance and directing pupils to correct their work, but this is not consistent.

Leaders have recently put into place lessons for small groups or individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them with communicating, reading, writing and social skills. Systems have now been put into place to track the progress of these pupils, but due to the recent implementation of new systems, leaders cannot accurately measure the impact of the school's work in this area. As a result, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities within class is variable. Individual pupils are not always well supported because teachers' plans do not consistently include provision for these pupils.

Leaders in the early years have a clear view of the strengths and areas that need to

develop. Since the inspection, investment has been made to improve resources, both inside the classroom and outdoors. Opportunities to develop language and personal and social skills are greater. Children have made better progress as a result, leading to greater proportions achieving a good level of development. However, provision is not sufficiently developed to maximise opportunities for children to develop the basic skills of reading, writing and using numbers more rapidly.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority at Nunsthorpe. Procedures are robust and all staff are highly tuned in to the need to protect children. All staff have been trained to identify signs of radicalisation. The leader for safeguarding has a wealth of experience and understanding of the community that she uses to good effect in her role.

Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance was slightly above national averages in the last school year.

Following the inspection, leaders took urgent action to address pupils' concerns about bullying. As a result of a deliberate and systematic approach, behaviour is much-improved, to the extent there have been no fixed-term exclusions since the inspection and only one child is being supported through a behaviour plan this term. Pupils report feeling happy in school. They say that bullying does happen, but that it is now dealt with by teachers and usually pupils do not continue to bully.

All parents spoken to by inspectors were appreciative of the school and staff. Most pupils expressed pride in their school. In lessons, most books are neatly presented and pupils take time to form their handwriting accurately. Some pupils are beginning to demonstrate the expected 'purple' behaviours, school code for good sitting, good manners and good work, for example. This common language for describing expectations of behaviour at Nunsthorpe is new and not yet consistently effective.

Behaviour around school is generally calm. Pupils who spoke to inspectors felt that behaviour has improved even since the arrival of the new principal and that incidences of poor behaviour are diminishing. The vast majority of pupils are responding well to new behaviour systems introduced this term. Outdoors, pupils are enjoying the new playground equipment and 'zones' where they can join in planned play activities. Initiatives to improve behaviour have led to the number of reported incidents falling dramatically. Even so, a small minority of pupils are misbehaving in lessons. This is often when staff are not consistently applying the agreed behaviour policy and where pupils' needs are not being fully met.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

2016 school assessment information shows that pupils are beginning to make better

progress across reading, writing and mathematics. Children in the early years demonstrated levels of skills and understanding slightly below those seen nationally. This represents a big improvement for the school.

The proportion of Year 1 pupils who attained the expected level in phonics exceeded national averages. 90% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the phonics standard in 2016, above results seen nationally for other pupils.

Increasing proportions of pupils in all year groups made expected levels by the end of 2016. The school comfortably met floor targets for progress. These are the minimum standards set by the government. Differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing in mathematics. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make the progress expected in writing or mathematics.

Overall, attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2016 remained low. One third of pupils attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics combined, well below outcomes seen across the country. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is well below that of other pupils by the end of key stage 1 and by the end of key stage 2 there is a sizable gap in reading and writing. Boys' attainment is lower than that of girls in several year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.

### **External support**

Oasis academy trust have offered more robust support to the school since the beginning of 2016. This included the appointment of an executive principal from a better-performing school to oversee leadership at Nunsthorpe, working two days a week to introduce tried and tested strategies to improve teaching. The support from the executive principal was made full time when the school was judged to require special measures. His actions have ensured improvements to the quality of teaching and made sure that more pupils have made expected progress than in the past.

In addition, the regional director visits the school each week to mentor leaders and to check on progress. He forms part of a monitoring and standards team who monitor the work of the school each half term. This monitoring team accurately identified issues that needed addressing at the point of the Ofsted inspection and put into place detailed plans to ensure that Nunsthorpe can quickly get to the point where it can provide an adequate education for its young people.