

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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20 February 2017

Ms Katie McGuire  
Principal  
Oasis Academy Nunsthorpe  
Sutcliffe Avenue  
Grimsby  
North East Lincolnshire  
DN33 1AW

Dear Ms McGuire

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

Following my visit with Heather Mensah, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 8–9 February 2017, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The academy’s action plan is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of 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.**

- 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 second monitoring inspection on 8 to 9 February 2017**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive principal, the principal and deputy principal, the regional director of the academy trust, middle leaders and two 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**

Since the previous monitoring visit, the deputy principal has taken up a new post and has been replaced by a new deputy principal. Two senior leaders, teachers in key stage 1, have been absent from school for long periods of time. Middle leaders have stepped up to the bar in order to plug the gaps in leadership that have been felt through these absences.

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

A strong professional relationship is rapidly building between the principal and deputy principal. Together these leaders are successfully building a more professional culture, making themselves more accessible to parents, pupils and staff. This is resulting in a 'can do' attitude pervading the school. The principal leads decisively and promotes confidence and trust through her even-handed approach to developing staff. One pupil explained to inspectors: 'It was an instant improvement when we got Ms McGuire.' Complementing the skills of the principal, the deputy principal has a strong understanding of how pupils learn and is using this knowledge to supportively develop teachers at all stages of their career, effectively moving the school forward.

Since the arrival of the deputy principal, the principal has reviewed all leadership roles and responsibilities so that there is now greater clarity regarding who is responsible for what within school. Under the close supervision of senior leaders, middle leaders are beginning to develop a better understanding of their roles.

Middle leaders for literacy have well-developed subject knowledge and for some time have been responsible for holding teachers to account for the progress of their pupils through looking at assessment information. They are currently further developing their remit to coach and mentor other staff, supporting them to understand how pupils learn and to use this knowledge to plan more effective learning.

The leader for mathematics has recently begun to carry out this role. He has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in mathematics teaching and has a clearer view of the impact of this work on pupils' progress. The need to provide additional

training for teachers to support them in the delivery of the more challenging curriculum is an identified priority. Changes being put in place have not had sufficient time to show a positive impact on pupils' attainment, although pupils are now presenting their work in mathematics more carefully.

The school receives pupil premium funding to support the progress of two thirds of its pupils. Following on from a second review of pupil premium spending, leaders have a clear idea about the difference that this spending makes to pupils' attainment. There is still a marked difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in reading, writing and mathematics. In the past, the focus has been on narrowing any differences in learning for pupils at the top of key stage 2. This is changing as current leaders recognise the need to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive effective support at all stages of their development. Recent changes to assessment systems allow the leader for pupil premium to check more effectively the progress these pupils make and to champion the needs of individual pupils. However, this is an area to be further developed as the impact of this work is yet to show in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

The academy council is knowledgeable about the local community and committed to involving parents in the life of the school. A recently formed parent forum was well attended, effectively giving parents a method of voicing their opinions.

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

Stronger leadership has raised teachers' expectations so that the 'green shoots' of more effective teaching are emerging. Improvement in teachers' planning is helping them to focus more successfully on pupils' needs. However, teachers' planning is still not sufficiently precise when it comes to meeting the needs of the least and most able pupils. The quality of teaching is developing at a faster rate in key stage 2, where teachers are securing appropriate progress for the majority of pupils. Progress is stronger in mathematics than in reading and writing. However, there is still too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching in the early years and key stage 1, where pupils are not making the rapid progress they should.

Leaders' monitoring of work in pupils' books led them to conclude that the policy for marking and feedback was not having the impact that it should. A new policy was introduced in January. As a result, greater consistency in the quality of feedback is now being seen and this is helping pupils to make more progress. However, senior leaders have identified that some variation in quality still exists. They are currently engaging middle leaders to support staff to further develop this area of work.

The principal and vice principal demonstrate a well-developed understanding about the quality of learning taking place. They convey high expectations to staff regarding what pupils are capable of achieving.

In some classes, positive relationships between staff and pupils are helping to

motivate pupils, to establish higher expectations and to move learning on. Inspectors observed pupils' improved attitudes to learning. However, as observed at the previous monitoring inspection, some low-level disruption can still be observed when the pace of learning has slowed, when pupils have completed the tasks or when the level of challenge has been too low.

In the main, teachers are displaying sufficient subject knowledge to plan sequences of learning that help pupils to develop their basic skills. Some variation exists in the way that teachers correct pupils' misconceptions, leading to pupils making basic errors and reinforcing gaps in pupils' knowledge. Very few opportunities are available for pupils to explain their reasoning, or to further deepen their knowledge and skills, so that the most able pupils in particular are unable to demonstrate learning at the levels of which they are capable.

The leader for special educational needs works closely with external agencies and with the learning mentors in school to ensure that pupils receive the right kind of social, emotional and academic support. She has reviewed the way that pupils' progress is tracked and how support is delivered. Consequently, the majority of pupils are now taught alongside their peers in class, with teachers quite rightly taking responsibility for the progress these pupils make. Well-planned training for teaching assistants has helped them to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more effectively. As a result, many pupils are making expected progress from their starting points, although the difference between their attainment and others' remains large.

Leaders have taken care to resource the early years appropriately so that children can now take advantage of a range of learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors. Staff are still using a range of assessment methods to record children's progress, providing a confusing picture of children's progress and making it difficult to accurately plan for the needs of individual children. Although there has been much improvement in the early years, teachers are not yet planning in sufficient detail to ensure that children get the most out of the different areas of provision and are not fully exploiting learning opportunities as they arise.

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

The learning mentor with responsibility for safeguarding continues to work intensively with external agencies and families to ensure pupils' safety. This work has recently involved liaison with the police to safeguard pupils at risk of radicalisation. This tenacious approach is helping to reduce persistent absence, which is currently below the national average. Overall, attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The attendance of children in the early years has been affected by an outbreak of chickenpox, bringing attendance in this key stage to below national figures.

Leaders and teachers are consistent in promoting good learning throughout school.

Pupils enjoy receiving a purple token in acknowledgement of hard work or good manners. Pupils' attitudes to learning are much improved since the last monitoring inspection. They have responded well to new behaviour reward systems which recognise their readiness for learning and willingness to 'do the right thing'. This is leading to more settled classes and most pupils are beginning to make more appropriate progress. However, when incidences of low-level disruption are seen, these are usually linked to a slower pace in learning when pupils have either finished their work or are unable to do it.

A very few pupils are exhibiting inappropriate behaviours when outside during breaktimes, but on the whole these incidents are now effectively managed. Lunchtime supervision is not consistently effective in promoting good behaviour in the youngest children, so they continue to have difficulty behaving appropriately in the dining room.

Leaders, very well supported by the pastoral team, have effectively driven home the message that bullying will not be tolerated. Pupils now have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. Pupil 'anti-bullying ambassadors' support other pupils in spotting bullying behaviour and staff follow up all incidences of bullying.

Careful recording and analysis of incidents by the behaviour leader show that serious breaches of behaviour are now rare. However, in order to get to this point, leaders have had to permanently exclude a small number of pupils due to prolonged inappropriate behaviours that have both intimidated other pupils and prevented learning in classes.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

School assessment information is currently showing that around two thirds of pupils are working at levels expected for their age in reading and mathematics, although only half of Year 6 are at the age-related expectation. Pupils are doing less well in writing, where only 30–40% of each class are demonstrating skills that are expected for their age. School information shows that pupils are making broadly expected progress in reading and slightly better progress in writing and mathematics. There is little difference in rates of progress between boys and girls, or between disadvantaged pupils and others. Leaders have only recently begun to track the progress of different prior attainment groups, so the progress of the most able and least able pupils in school is still not clear.

Fewer pupils are currently on track to achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check than last year. This is due to a disruption in the leadership of phonics, compounded by changes to staff. Leaders are aware of the need to rapidly improve phonics teaching so that pupils can make the swift progress they need to maintain progress made in this area last year. Progress in the early years is still too slow so that too few children are making sufficiently rapid progress to achieve a good level of development.

Although improving, pupils' books show that there is still considerable variation in pupils' acquisition and application of basic skills. Leaders have overhauled the way assessment information is recorded and collated. They have begun to track the progress of pupils from their different starting points. This work is in the early stages but indications are that pupils are beginning to make the required progress. There is little difference between the progress of boys and girls, or between disadvantaged pupils and others. However, the school's assessment information shows that, on average, pupils are still working at levels well below those expected for their age. Similarly, information reveals that the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are large.

In mathematics, increasing numbers of pupils are working at levels expected for their age. Books show that there still remains a lack of challenge and opportunities for pupils to work at greater depth. There is too much repetition of tasks that pupils can already do in some classes.

### **External support**

The trust has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose. The regional director keeps a close eye on the progress the school is making towards achieving the planned milestones. The trust has conducted a further review of the school's performance, providing leaders with an accurate view of the current state of play and providing an impetus to further improvement. The executive principal has continued to support leaders due to the departure of the previous vice-principal. This has helped leaders to keep continuity and to ensure that the momentum in school improvement is maintained. Professional networks facilitated by the trust are effectively supporting teachers to develop their subject knowledge and to moderate pupils' work together.