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Katie McGuire
Principal
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Dear Ms McGuire

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Nunsthorpe

Following my visit with Heather Mensah, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 3 and 4 May 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school 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.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy council, the regional school's 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 third monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 May 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal, deputy principal, the assistant principal and middle leaders. They also met with the regional director of the academy trust 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. In addition to checking the school's progress against the broader areas identified at the last full inspection, inspectors were particularly looking at the quality of teachers' questioning to promote better learning and the effectiveness of teaching in science and other areas of the curriculum. In addition, they were looking at the progress of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Context

There have been further changes to staff since the last inspection. A restructure of the senior leadership team has reduced the number of assistant headteachers from three to one. Two assistant principals have left the school, leaving a senior leadership team of three. To ensure that their classes are covered, leaders have recruited a teacher on a fixed-term contract to one class and have arranged a job share between the special educational needs coordinator and higher-level teaching assistant to cover the second post. A third teacher has left the school and has been replaced by a long-term supply teacher. One teaching assistant has left the school and another two teaching assistants are on maternity leave.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal and deputy principal demonstrate vision and determination to provide the best education for pupils. They are even-handed in their dealings with pupils, parents and staff and are unafraid to tackle difficult issues. The assistant principal has been a quietly stabilising force throughout a period of turbulence, providing effective support for staff. Middle leaders are growing in confidence and, under the watchful eye of the deputy principal, are quickly developing the knowledge and skills needed to develop staff.

Leaders have taken swift action to address any pockets of inadequate teaching. They have effectively supported teachers across the whole school to improve their practice through focused professional development staff meetings and the provision of coaching sessions targeted on the needs of individual staff. One member of staff was keen to let inspectors know they placed great value on the support received by leaders. Leaders have considered the impact of teaching across a range of indicators. They have been rightly cautious in their view of the impact of teaching. This is because it is difficult to be sure of the impact of teaching over time due to

several changes to staff over the course of the year. There are some tangible improvements since the last monitoring inspection but some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain.

Leaders have commissioned a second review of pupil premium spending. They have quickly taken action to address the issues identified, namely to ensure that strategies to improve pupil outcomes are implemented to a high standard, to help all staff to use assessment information more effectively and to address individual pupils' learning needs. Leaders and teachers have actively supported the attainment of Year 6 pupils during 'Easter school'. Many staff delivered additional lessons to maintain pupils' momentum in learning.

Attendance across school is broadly in line with the national average. This is in no small part because of the relentless work carried out by the safeguarding officer who moves mountains to get pupils to attend school regularly. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has increased and is now above that of similar pupils nationally.

Teaching and provision in the early years has improved rapidly. This is because leaders and teachers have worked with urgency to address the issues identified at the last monitoring inspection. Teachers' planning now reflects the needs of all children and makes the best use of the provision to ensure that children are learning well. Teachers plan learning in the outdoor area carefully to ensure that children are able to develop their gross motor and social skills appropriately. Leaders have ensured that children are safe in the setting, regularly undertaking checks on the equipment children use and appropriately recording safeguarding issues.

Leaders acknowledge there is work to do to ensure that the curriculum across the whole school reflects the needs of pupils and is fit for purpose. Leadership of areas of the curriculum other than English and mathematics is not sufficiently developed, resulting in a variability in the quality of learning in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Evidence shows that some important aspects of teaching are improving. Teachers' planning meets the needs of pupils in their class with a greater degree of consistency. The quality of teachers' questioning is improving, giving them a much better understanding of how well pupils have grasped new concepts. Teachers are now generally more adept at pushing pupils to explain their thinking, leading to better learning in the majority of classes.

Leaders' work to promote the use of effective questioning as a tool for learning is paying off. In classes, it is possible to discern a real shift in the use of questioning to determine pupils' understanding, but more importantly, to correct misunderstandings as they arise during learning. Overall, teachers' questioning is

sensitive, timely and demonstrates real growth in terms of developing their own skills.

Teachers' adherence to the school's marking and feedback policy is much more consistent when compared to practice seen at the last monitoring inspection. Pupils are used to responding to their teachers' comments. Teachers have raised their expectations of how pupils will present their work so that, in the vast majority of books seen, pupils demonstrate pride through accurate handwriting and neat presentation.

Progress in reading and writing is beginning to accelerate in those classes where teachers have remained constant. However, pupils' progress has stuttered in classes taught by several teachers. Pupils' progress is currently less secure in reading than in writing. Differences between pupils' targets and their actual progress are wider in reading than in writing and mathematics. However, teachers do not consistently plan sequences of lessons that effectively support pupils to develop the skills they need in writing. Some pupils struggle to articulate their thoughts due to insufficient planned opportunities to develop their speaking skills.

Evidence in pupils' books shows there is still work needed to improve the quality of learning in science. In some cases, pupils experiment and successfully record their findings but this is not always the case. There is now more convincing evidence of regular science teaching in Year 2 and Year 6, for example. However, books show there is much variability in pupils' experience of science. In some classes, pupils have had very few opportunities to develop scientific skills.

In some classes, the needs of the most able pupils are met successfully. As a result, in these classes pupils make secure progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, their progress is not as secure in writing. Additionally, some teachers do not consistently expect enough of the most able pupils or provide them with additional challenge. In these classes, the most able pupils are unable to demonstrate their competency and are denied the opportunity to progress more quickly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour has rapidly improved since the last inspection. School is calm and orderly and pupils are responding very well to whole-school systems that now consistently promote pupils' good behaviour. The behaviour inclusion manager has been very effective in his role, regularly meeting with pupils, parents and staff to support pupils to improve their behaviour. Although there have been a small number of fixed-term exclusions and three permanent exclusions, incidents of poor behaviour have dropped dramatically, leaving teachers and the pastoral team to concentrate on supporting pupils to develop positive behaviour for learning.

School routines support pupils' sense of well-being. A daily 'check in' as pupils arrive

into class and 'check out' at the end of the day gives pupils the chance to say if they have a worry, either personal or academic. This enables pupils to receive timely support and encouragement from the pastoral team at the point it is most needed.

During the monitoring inspection, very few incidents of low-level disruption were seen, indicative of just how much improvement leaders and teachers have secured in behaviour. Pupils, even the most vulnerable, are becoming resilient learners, able to ask questions or tell an adult when they do not understand. Pupils are well occupied during breaktimes, taking advantage of equipment to play cooperatively. As a result, school is a happy place where pupils show self-discipline and concentrate on learning in lessons.

Pupils reinforce the view that behaviour is improving. They fully understand behaviour systems and say that staff deal swiftly with poor behaviour. They believe playground behaviour has improved and that bullying is now rare.

School now provides a free breakfast club to enable disadvantaged pupils to start the day ready for learning. This is well attended. Not only is behaviour for learning improved; this provision has also contributed to improved attendance and has helped to reduce inappropriate behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Leaders have worked hard to secure the accuracy of assessment information. They now have a clear view of the attainment and progress of pupils, including that of different groups of pupils, across the school.

The current picture shows that in almost all classes, pupils continue to work at below age-related expectations. In key stage 1, around 40% of pupils are at typical standards. Pupils in key stage 2 are moving closer to the national average in reading and mathematics with between 60% and 88% of pupils at age-appropriate standards. Pupils' attainment in writing is generally below reading and mathematics. At the end of key stage 2, around 50% of pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.

The school's assessment information shows a mixed picture regarding the progress of disadvantaged pupils. There is no discernible pattern throughout school although differences in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and others in school exist in some classes. However, leaders recognise the progress of disadvantaged pupils would not currently compare well against the progress of other pupils nationally.

The school's current assessment information shows that the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lagging behind that of other pupils. In some cases, differences are very wide, particularly in reading. In one year group, the proportion of pupils requiring support is large and differences in their

progress when compared to others are evident in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making better progress than at the time of the last inspection. Some of this progress is attributable to pupils now being taught alongside their peers in class. As a mark of success, in most classes it is difficult to point out these pupils because they are thriving and learning well.

As a result of improved leadership in the early years, the proportion of children on track to achieve a good level of development is much better when compared to children leaving the early years last year. Teachers expect 67% of children to achieve a good level of development in 2017 compared to 65% last year. Teachers have a good understanding of the areas in which children still need to develop. For example, they are aware that children are struggling currently with shape, space and measure and are maintaining a focus on provision and teaching to promote children's understanding further. Careful tracking of disadvantaged children and of boys and girls is ensuring that differences between different groups of children are rapidly closing.

External support

Oasis Community Learning trust continues to provide appropriate support for leaders. The regional director is confident in the ability of the principal and deputy principal to drive the school forward. At their most recent monitoring visit in March 2017, the trust considered there to be strong progress due to determined leadership. Middle leaders for reading, writing and mathematics spoke highly about the benefits of attending trust network meetings.

The trust has commissioned a specialist leader of education to support the development of the early years. A second specialist has been brokered to help leaders to develop the curriculum further but this work has yet to begin.

There is regular and effective communication between the chair of the academy council and the regional director, enabling the chair to feel equipped to challenge leaders. The academy council are knowledgeable and committed to improving outcomes for the whole community. Minutes of meetings show the academy council effectively challenge leaders on pupil outcomes, pressing leaders for proof of their assertions.