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Mr Andrew Chubb
Executive Principal
Archbishop Sentamu Academy
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Dear Mr Chubb

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Archbishop Sentamu Academy

Following my visit with Michele Costello, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 13–14 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned that the school had not been re-brokered despite the judgement that it required special measures in May 2016. The focus of the inspection was the impact of the actions taken by leaders and managers to address the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection in May 2016.

Evidence

Inspectors met with you, other members of the leadership team, a group of staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body, the chair of the trust board and the school effectiveness advisor for the diocese. Inspectors visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work, some of which was last year's work. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors on the majority of the visits to lessons. The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including: the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements; the school improvement plans; records of external reviews of the school; minutes of the local governing committee (LGC); information about pupils' progress and their attendance.

Having considered 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 school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Context

Archbishop Sentamu Academy is an above average-sized secondary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above the national average.

Since the section 5 inspection in May 2016, a large number of teachers have left the school. Initially, recruitment of teachers for specific subjects such as mathematics, science and geography proved difficult. However, from September 2017 the school is fully staffed with specialist teachers. In the period since the inspection the school has recruited new middle leaders for mathematics, science, history and geography. The new head of English was an internal appointment.

Inspection findings

Leadership at all levels is improving. Senior leaders have a detailed improvement plan which includes success criteria and half-termly milestones. The LGC use these milestones to monitor the impact of the actions taken to improve the school. As a result, some improvement can be seen in all the areas which required improvement at the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of planning, teaching, learning and assessment by senior and middle leaders is more rigorous and consistent. Leaders use the robust quality assurance process weekly, along with regular observations in lessons, to build a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. As a result of the feedback that staff receive following the quality assurance, planning learning to meet the needs of pupils has improved.

Leaders take action when monitoring indicates concerns in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Support and challenge are put in place to help teachers develop their practice through observing others and coaching and mentoring. As a result of the additional challenge, some teachers have left the school and others have improved their practice. Leaders' records suggest considerable improvement in the quality of teaching in the last year. However, the improvements in teaching have not led to rapid enough improvements in outcomes across all subjects.

Middle leaders' development has been supported by appropriate courses and by working alongside external consultants and specialist leaders of education (SLEs) from the Pathfinder Teaching School Alliance. Senior leaders hold monthly meetings with middle leaders to hold them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes. Middle leaders are starting to be more confident in their leadership roles and in monitoring and evaluating the work of their subject area and holding teachers to account for pupils' progress.

The LGC have responded to the review of governance and a skills audit by ensuring that governors have appropriate training. As a result, governance has improved. Governors are self-evaluative and have plans in place to develop their presence in the school. They challenge senior leaders more effectively and recognise where the school has improved and where further improvements are needed, particularly in accelerating pupils' progress.

The quality of teaching is improving. Teachers and teaching assistants value the wide range of personalised training opportunities provided to help them develop their skills. Those new to teaching are well supported. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and many use effective questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply. A particular strength in mathematics is teachers' effective response to pupils' misconceptions. Year 11 pupils confirmed that teaching has improved, particularly in mathematics. They say that learning is more interesting and feedback helps them to know how to improve their work. However, in some lessons teachers do not deepen pupils' understanding and time is wasted on low-level tasks.

Most teachers have increased expectations of what pupils can achieve. New staff, including newly qualified teachers, are quickly establishing their expectations and routines. Teachers follow the school's policy for assessment, checking pupils' prior learning and providing different learning opportunities to help pupils build on what they already know. Evidence in books and in lessons showed that work is increasingly provided to challenge the most able in English, mathematics and science. Practice examination questions used at the end of lessons are developing pupils' understanding and confidence. The quality of the work in books has improved as a result of higher expectations resulting from the rigorous quality assurance process. However, these improvements are not consistent in all subjects.

In the majority of lessons, and around the school, behaviour is calm and sensible. Pupils are polite and pleasant to each other and adults. Pupils look smart in their uniform. They are increasingly engaged in their learning. However, in some lessons pupils do not put in the effort they should and teachers work harder than their pupils. Leaders make good use of the in-house alternative provision to keep fixed-term exclusions to a very low level compared to the national average. However, there was an increase in permanent exclusions last year.

Since the previous inspection leaders have reviewed alternative provision. No external providers are used by the school. As a result, alternative provision is fit for purpose. Pupils are well supported in the school's 'Elvin Centre' by teachers and teaching assistants. The curriculum covers English, mathematics and science and accredited vocational courses. Evidence from the school's own tracking suggests that some pupils make better progress at the centre than they did in school, but the positive impact on behaviour is more marked. The 'R.E.D.' room is used as an alternative to fixed-term exclusion where pupils complete their timetabled work. The Sentamu Academy Learning Trust has a pupil referral unit, 'Aspire'. This unit also supports the very low exclusion rate.

Since the previous inspection leaders have introduced a clear strategy for raising attendance and reducing persistent absence. As a result of careful monitoring by the attendance team, and a raised profile for attendance across the school including rewards, attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. However, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to reduce the persistent absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and Year 10 and Year 11 pupils.

In 2016 attainment and progress were significantly below the national average in English, mathematics, science and humanities. Unvalidated results for 2017 shared by the school suggest that there has been some improvement in attainment in English language, mathematics and additional science, although the Year 11 pupils in 2017 had lower prior attainment than their peers in 2016. However, outcomes are inconsistent across subjects. Attainment in geography and history, for example, is very low. The school's own tracking suggests that outcomes for the current Year 11 will continue the trajectory of improvement. However, predictions in English, science, history and geography were too optimistic in 2017. Work is quickly underway to check the accuracy of assessment this year. Leaders, including governors, recognise the need for more accelerated progress across the school if outcomes are to be at least in line with national averages for all subjects.

Plans are in place to support stronger progress for the current Year 11. Pupils are in small tutor groups with a subject tutor who can focus on the specific gaps in their learning. A group of 12 pupils observed during the inspection were already making very rapid strides in their understanding of chemical bonding after only a few sessions of extra tuition. Extra sessions after school are planned. Leaders say that there is a change in culture among the Year 11 pupils, who are now keen to do extra work to aid their progress. This view is supported by the pupils themselves. It is too soon to see the full impact of these interventions.

There have been two reviews of the impact of pupil premium funding. The second noted that there is a 'palpable sense that things are different' and that the school 'is doing all the right things to improve outcomes for its disadvantaged pupils'. There was a small reduction in the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in Year 11 in 2017.

The impact of actions taken by leaders is most pronounced in the sixth form. Leaders are sharp in their analysis and self-evaluation. They are ambitious for the sixth form and have a clear strategy for further improvement. The requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme are now met. The curriculum meets the needs of the students and is regularly reviewed to ensure that courses match students' needs and aspirations. Attendance is carefully tracked and consequently has improved since the previous inspection. Retention rates have increased because leaders ensure that students are on the right courses and are well supported. Outcomes improved in 2016 and minimum standards were met for academic and vocational qualifications. Based on unvalidated data for 2017, outcomes continue to show

improvement.

External support

School leaders make use of a variety of external consultants to provide independent monitoring and evaluation of the school. This is helpful in checking the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and their identification of next steps. SLEs from the Pathfinder Teaching School Alliance have supported improvements in middle leadership and in the development of the quality of teaching in mathematics and science. The school effectiveness advisor for the Diocese of York plays a role in monitoring and evaluation as part of the LGC. She has contributed to the improved challenge provided by the governors.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing committee, the director of education for the Diocese of York, 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

Helen Lane
Her Majesty's Inspector