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3 October 2017

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

Dear Mrs McGuire

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

Following my visit with Christine Cook, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 20 and 21 September 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 fourth 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 school council, 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 20 September 2017 to 21 September 2017**

### **Evidence**

Together with the principal, deputy principal and assistant principal, inspectors looked at pupils' progress data, information about the performance of teachers, documents relating to behaviour and safety and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 16 lessons, some alongside senior leaders. They listened to Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read, and observed pupils' learning in small groups. They spoke with pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and at playtimes. An inspector spoke with parents and carers at the end of the school day. A complaint made by a parent to Ofsted during the inspection was also taken into account.

Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders and the chair of the school council. A meeting was also held with the regional director of the academy trust.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, one third of teaching staff have changed. Seven teaching staff have left the school and six have been replaced. Three new members of staff are newly qualified teachers and all are working alongside effective teachers. Three experienced teachers have also joined the school. Two assistant headteachers have left and roles and responsibilities have been clarified within the leadership team.

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

Leaders are highly focused, they read and research widely and they are keen to use this knowledge to inform decisions about teaching and provision. The leadership team has been restructured and behaviour, safeguarding, administration and special educational needs leaders are now represented in a structure that is focused clearly on raising standards throughout the school.

Leaders have appraised the effectiveness of assessment throughout the school and have introduced new methods of assessing and recording, using a combination of test results and teacher assessment. They are now confident about the accuracy of assessment but, due to the newness of the system, are currently finding it difficult to measure progress accurately from the previous year. However, leaders, working in partnership with the trust, have undertaken a range of monitoring activities, including regular 'book looks' to track the progress of pupils. Assessment information has been used effectively to challenge teachers about the progress of all pupils in their care.

The principal has now been in school for one year. She has brought vision and ambition for pupils and the community. Although the year has seen much turbulence in staffing, the principal has recruited staff of the right quality to enable the school to move forwards. The deputy principal is extremely determined to raise standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning. She is regularly in class, modelling good practice, and coaching by staff at all levels is helping to deepen teachers' understanding of their craft.

Middle leaders are now having a positive influence because of training and coaching by senior leaders. These leaders are involved in the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and make recommendations to teachers on how to improve further. Leaders of mathematics have a very clear picture of the state of play in mathematics and what is needed to improve learning in the subject. They work well together and can show the effect of monitoring and evaluation. For example, an appraisal of the calculation policy led to a tightening up of the quality of teaching in number. The new leader of literacy for key stage 1 is knowledgeable in her subject and has already taken action to improve the teaching of writing so that it is now possible to see sequences of learning that underpin pupils' understanding of the writing process.

Leaders' revamp of the curriculum is in its infancy. In the past, the learning of the three Rs has been paramount. Leaders are keen to make learning across school fun and relevant to pupils and have begun this process in developing teaching in science. Leaders see physical education as an important element of developing pupils' health and sense of well-being. Pupils have access to two hours of physical education each week. They are now enjoying regular science lessons designed to foster curiosity and to develop investigative skills. Inspectors observed investigative science in action, for example Year 4 pupils were eagerly planning an investigation to melt ice lollies using the principles of a fair test. However, leaders are fully aware of the need to develop further opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills across the curriculum.

Leaders are unafraid of addressing safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding officer has a deep understanding of the local community and continues to use this to great effect to support vulnerable children and their families. Over one fifth of pupils in school are currently supported to help them deal with domestic violence in their homes. This is a growing area of concern and the safeguarding officer works effectively with external agencies, including the police, to protect pupils from harm. The school regularly supports families in difficult circumstances, for example with food parcels and the provision of clothes or essential household items.

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

There have been several new recruits to the staff this term, in the light of significant turbulence in staffing over the last year. Leaders completed all planned actions to improve the quality of teaching but changes to staff meant it was not possible to

achieve consistency. However, leaders have begun the year with a full complement of staff. All classroom-based staff understand the expectations upon them to use agreed approaches to planning, teaching, marking, feedback and assessment, as well as behaviour management. This is leading to a much higher degree of consistency in pupils' experiences. Learning environments are well organised and resources are readily accessible to pupils.

Inspectors observed a high degree of consistency in teaching approaches across the school. Leaders have ensured that teachers' expectations are appropriately high. Pupils know what is expected of them because routines are well embedded. There is a strong focus on encouraging pupils to work independently. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now taught in class, alongside their peers, enabling them to make more secure progress.

In line with the school's policy, pupils are responding well to teachers' feedback, particularly in key stage 2. What is more striking is the improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils are now listening to their teachers and trying hard to do what is required of them. Teachers' effective use of mini-plenaries is helping to fend off misconceptions before they became embedded and all teachers are successfully encouraging pupils to use technical vocabulary. As a result, pupils can explain previous and current learning well.

Sequences of learning are successfully supporting pupils' acquisition of basic skills in mathematics. Leaders have worked with focus to ensure that teachers understand how best to develop pupils' basic skills. The teaching of mathematics is much improved and number skills are being effectively developed. Mathematics books show pupils are successfully taking on a challenge at the end of a unit of work or lesson.

Pupils in key stage 2 are making more secure progress in reading and writing than in the past because of well-structured lessons that build on pupils' prior understanding. Leaders have worked hard to encourage pupils to have a love of reading and, with this in mind, are joining with the local secondary school to use their library. The most able pupils in key stage 2 are reading regularly and fluently, but this is not typical across the school. The new leader of literacy has ensured sequences of lessons intended to support pupils' writing and help equip them with the skills they need to achieve well. This is leading to improvements in the quality of pupils' writing in key stage 2.

Basic skills underpinning reading and writing are less well developed in key stage 1. Some variability in the teaching of phonics means that pupils are not making sufficient progress in early writing. Some boys, in Year 1 in particular, are struggling with basic letter formation. They are unable to make independent attempts at writing due to an insecure understanding of the sounds letters make. Low prior-attaining boys in Year 2 are struggling to read fluently because they are heavily reliant upon breaking words into their phonic parts and are not confident when

blending.

Teachers are ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are accessing the same learning as their peers. The leader for special educational needs ensures that teaching assistants provide effective pre-teaching, encouragement in class and more detailed same-day intervention to help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress and stay included. Consequently, overall, most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make comparable progress to other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Pupils' behaviour has been transformed since the last inspection. Incidents of more serious breaches of behaviour that used to be commonplace are now extremely rare. Behaviour at playtimes is also much improved because of a highly consistent approach to fostering good behaviour used by all staff. This is because of the very determined efforts of leaders, including the behaviour inclusion officer. His ability to support pupils having a bad day in a firm but fair way has led to him gaining respect and trust. Pupils now follow school rules and routines consistently, almost without exception. The behaviour and inclusion officer has shifted his attention from improving pupils' social behaviour to looking with intent at pupils' behaviour for learning, supporting those who may need additional emotional support to learn well that day. The learning mentors ably support him in doing this.

The school sits within one of the most deprived areas of the country and many pupils have complex needs. The school is highly inclusive and staff take great care to understand the social and emotional demands placed upon pupils and provide support for these. Even given this, because of the determined efforts of the pastoral team and senior leaders, attendance continues to improve and is now above national figures.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The overall picture of pupils' most current attainment, by the end of the 2017 summer term, is mixed. Just over half of pupils achieved the expected standard at the Year 1 phonics check. This represents a decline on 2016 and is 20% below the national average. There was little difference in the attainment of boys and girls or of disadvantaged pupils and others, but leaders acknowledge that rapid improvements are needed to enable pupils to read and write more confidently. The decline in phonics is partly attributable to difficulties in securing staffing through Year 1 last year. This problem has now been addressed through the appointment of new teachers.

Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 are below national figures. 55% of pupils attained the expected standard in reading and mathematics and 57% in writing.



Fewer disadvantaged pupils than others attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. A higher proportion of boys achieved expected standards than girls. 59% of this cohort achieved a good level of development when in the early years so that, on the surface, it would appear that they have not made sufficient progress. However, nearly 20% of pupils arrive at or leave the school during a key stage, affecting pupils' progress at both key stages 1 and 2.

At the end of key stage 2, half of all pupils attained the expected standard in reading, 55% in writing and 53% in mathematics. Overall, 40% of pupils made the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This shows expected progress from key stage 1, where only one third of pupils made the expected standard in all three subjects when they were in Year 2. On average, boys did better than girls in mathematics, but girls outperformed boys in reading and writing.

However, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was almost 30% lower than that of other pupils in school in reading and writing. There was a difference of 20% in mathematics. Differences when compared to other pupils nationally are even wider. Leaders understand the need to continue the focus on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make up ground rapidly.

It is encouraging to see improved progress in pupils' books. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are presenting their work well and are more productive this year than in the past. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress in line with other pupils in school.

## **Early years**

At the time of the monitoring inspection, Nursery children had been in school for only eight days and those in Reception for 11 days. Despite this, children were very settled in Reception because of the effective transition arrangements made during the summer term. The learning environment is well organised and is helping children to display sustained concentration as they become absorbed in interesting activities. Staff in the early years are clear about the next steps individual children need to take to further their learning. Planning by these staff is thorough and addresses each different area of learning. Adults model and extend language effectively and help to sustain children's interests through timely questions. Parents are encouraged to view their child's progress with an online assessment tool which they can access at home.

Children behave well, following rules and routines calmly. Children move about the setting quietly and independently, even though they have only been in the school for a relatively short time. Regular attendance is successfully encouraged. One child was keen to let inspectors know that his class was in line for a reward for 100% attendance that week.

Leaders and staff have worked to good effect to secure accurate assessment in Nursery and Reception. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen to 70% in 2017. This figure is above the current national average and represents an improvement on last year. Differences between boys and girls were minimal and a slightly higher proportion of disadvantaged children than others achieved a good level of development.

Leaders recognise that, despite children making good progress, outcomes in reading and writing could be even better. At the time of the monitoring inspection, early years staff were trialling a new approach to teaching phonics. They are keen to develop this further to enable the children to make the rapid progress they need to make if they are to catch up with their peers nationally.

### **External support**

Oasis Community Learning Trust continues to provide appropriate support to enable the school to improve. Termly reviews keep leaders apprised of the overall effectiveness of the school and signpost areas that need attention. Regular meetings and regional networks support the work of middle leaders. The regional director has brokered additional support to help leaders in interrogating assessment information and in raising attainment in phonics this term.