

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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7 November 2018

Mrs Helen Adams  
Principal  
Oasis Academy Longmeadow  
Broadcloth Lane  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 7HE

Dear Mrs Adams

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Longmeadow**

Following my visit to your school on 22 October 2018 with Matthew Cottrell, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection that took place in May 2017. 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 actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

the school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2017**

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school by making sure that teachers:
  - have effective guidance on successful strategies for teaching reading, writing and mathematics
  - check pupils' understanding so that they can adapt their teaching in order to meet the learning needs of pupils more precisely
  - raise expectations of what pupils can achieve and make sure that the most able pupils have the challenge they need to deepen and extend their thinking
  - support pupils who need extra help effectively, such as pupils who speak English as an additional language, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - help pupils to improve the presentation of their work.
- Continue to improve aspects of personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
  - pupils have a greater awareness of how to be tolerant and respectful and that this is demonstrated in how pupils talk to adults and one another around the school
  - staff are able to manage behaviour well so that learning is not interrupted by poor behaviour during lessons
  - attendance levels improve so that levels of absence are no higher than the national averages.
- Ensure that leaders:
  - develop subject leaders' skills so that they are able to identify the strengths and areas to develop across the school and so that they rigorously check that the improvements they make have a positive impact on pupils' progress
  - improve communication with parents and carers about the progress their children are making, particularly for those parents whose children speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - ensure that the additional funding received for pupils who are disadvantaged and for those who have special educational needs has an impact on improved outcomes for these pupils
  - review how teaching assistants are deployed to ensure that their skills are used effectively to support outcomes for pupils.

- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that teachers:
  - have accurate information about what pupils know, understand and can do
  - have guidance about how to use this information to plan activities that meet pupils' learning needs
  - raise their expectations, so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make at least good progress and more pupils achieve higher standards.

A review of how the additional pupil premium funding is used is recommended in order to improve this aspect of leadership and management.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22 October 2018**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons jointly with senior leaders. Pupils' behaviour around the school was also observed. Additionally, inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan. The lead inspector reviewed notes of visits by the national and regional directors for the Oasis Community Learning multi-academy trust. Furthermore, inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils, parents and representatives of the multi-academy trust.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection there have been many staffing changes. The principal has assumed sole responsibility for this role since the beginning of the academic year. Previously, the role had been shared with another colleague from the multi-academy trust. Since September, two new senior leaders have been in post. Their responsibilities include monitoring pupils' progress, provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and staff professional development. Six out of seven teachers are new since September. Three of these are newly qualified teachers. The designated safeguarding lead left the school at the end of the previous academic year; her responsibilities have been taken on by the headteacher.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Since the previous monitoring visit, the principal has continued to take a decisive, determined approach to raising standards and expectations. Staff employed at the school are required to meet exacting standards. Leaders monitor their work closely to ensure that the quality of teaching continues to rise. The principal continues to confront staff underperformance and take difficult decisions to ensure that pupils receive the best possible teaching. Consequently, however, there is a high number of staff who are new to the school, some of whom are new to teaching. It is too early, therefore, to judge the impact of their work fully.

There is now greater leadership capacity in the school with the addition of two new leaders to the senior team. Both leaders have developed valuable expertise in other schools, which they are bringing to bear at Oasis Longmeadow. There is a palpable sense of upbeat optimism, in part because of the injection of new staff who are excited by current challenges. Increased capacity can be seen in the way leaders are monitoring pupils' progress with greater analytical precision. It is also apparent in the improved oversight of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Furthermore, greater capacity has created the right conditions for the growth of middle leadership and better professional development for staff.

At the time of the previous monitoring visit, there was little middle leadership to speak of. Now, however, subject leaders have been appointed to take responsibility for certain, mainly non-core, subjects. These include performing arts, science and physical education. This work is in its early stages, so that not all subjects are represented. However, subject leaders share the enthusiasm and can-do optimism of senior leaders, as do other members of staff across the school. They are keen to take responsibility for their different areas and work as a team to do so. They relish the challenge and are not afraid of the accountability.

Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and providing suitable training for teachers are in place. This is because they acknowledge that the quality of teaching needs to improve further. They are also aware of the need to mitigate the potentially destabilising effect of so many new staff joining the school at the same time. Leaders oversee a well-planned programme of professional development opportunities that are matched to the needs of staff. Where necessary, leaders are proactive about providing effective support for teachers who are underperforming. Newly qualified teachers receive dedicated support and are monitored closely by a senior leader.

Leaders are working successfully to tackle the weaknesses highlighted in the previous monitoring visit. The principal now has a more-secure grasp of the effectiveness of various strategies to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This is because she has evaluated them carefully and considered strategies in the context of the wider quality of teaching.

The principal has also prioritised the school's engagement with the community and building relationships with parents. She is providing some much-needed stability following turbulence in leadership both prior to and since the previous inspection. Parents who spoke with inspectors are positive about the school's current direction and say it has improved. They feel that the principal is a familiar, accessible face, along with other staff. Confidence in the school is being restored in the local community. Leaders are also taking opportunities to join in community events and ensure that the school plays a role in the life of the town. For example, pupils represented the school at a recent carnival, attend author workshops at the library and make visits to Trowbridge Museum.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement**

- Leaders have an accurate, detailed and objective understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know what needs to improve and acknowledge that the school is not yet where they want it to be. This attitude is driving improvement throughout the school.
- Teachers across the school are consistently providing helpful feedback to pupils to help them improve their work, in accordance with the school's policy. However, leaders acknowledge that this work requires further refinement to

ensure that teachers target the most important features of pupils' work in their feedback.

- The presentation of pupils' work continues to improve as expectations of their achievement and behaviour continue to arise. Pupils are taking more pride in, and responsibility for, their work.
- The behaviour system is becoming well established and provides useful support to staff for the management of behaviour. Staff can deploy a balanced range of rewards and sanctions as required. Pupils respond well to the positive measures and feel motivated to do well. Consequently, pupils report that there is less fighting and less bullying.
- Pupils' achievement is improving. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2018 was significantly higher than the proportion of pupils who left in the previous year. Provisional published information for 2018 indicates that the progress of these pupils is at least in line with the national average across subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check was higher in 2018 than previously, and close to the national average.
- The new senior leader responsible for assessment is adopting a meticulous, precise approach to the analysis of progress information. This is enabling him to identify patterns and trends in the achievement of different groups. Consequently, leaders are fully aware of areas of underperformance, such as boys' writing and the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Overall attendance is improving. However, a small number of persistent absentees who have complex needs and backgrounds are affecting overall attendance figures. These issues are leading to school refusal in certain cases. For most pupils, however, the school's proactive approach and close monitoring are helping pupils' attendance to improve. Leaders understand that they must continue to search out and consider the use of different means to secure better attendance, including the use of penalty notices.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement**

- Teaching, although improving, is still not consistently good across the school. For example, teachers are not consistently providing work that is matched to pupils' needs. In the lower years, teachers need to provide better support for less-able pupils and more challenge for the most able when teaching mastery of mathematics.
- Work to improve the quality of teaching since the previous monitoring visit has been diluted to an extent, because of high staff turnover.
- By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at the higher standard, is below the national average. Attainment is improving, as stated above, but is not yet good enough.

- Phonics teaching is not yet strong enough to secure consistently high outcomes, despite the better results of 2018. New staff are receiving effective phonics training from a senior leader. However, it is early days and too soon to judge the impact of this training.
- Pupils' topic books show that their understanding of history, geography and religious education is underdeveloped. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities to acquire background knowledge, practise cross-curricular writing and apply critical thinking to different topics.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been hampered historically because leaders have not had a firm-enough grasp of provision. The SEN register has not been accurate, pupils' progress has not been tracked and needs have not been met. This is now changing with the appointment of the senior leader who fulfils the role of special educational needs coordinator. Nevertheless, this work is new from September.
- Exclusions are still high because of the behaviour of a small group of pupils whose needs are complex. Staff are developing nurture provision, such as 'The Rainbow Room' to help accommodate behavioural, emotional and social needs. However, the sanction of exclusion is still required from time to time, in spite of this provision. Leaders recognise that exclusions are too high.

### **External support**

Leaders continue to be well supported by the wider multi-academy trust. Staff from other Oasis schools, who have expertise in particular areas, have helped staff to improve aspects of provision, such as early years. The multi-academy trust representative who shared the role of co-principal until the end of the previous academic year continues to provide regular leadership support. Moreover, the Oasis regional and national directors continue to monitor the school closely and provide objective, accurate reports on the school's progress.