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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 June 2023

Chris Reynolds
Principal
Archbishop Sentamu Academy
1 Bilton Grove
Hull
HU9 5YB

Dear Chris Reynolds

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Archbishop Sentamu Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 18 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in May 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, other staff, trustees, governors and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, spoke to groups of pupils, scrutinised behaviour records and observed social times and lesson transitions. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Archbishop Sentamu Academy remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Since my last visit, in January 2023, you have been appointed as the permanent, substantive principal. The interim principal is now acting in a consultancy capacity for the remainder of the academic year. An associate principal from the trust is also now overseeing the school's strategy to raise attendance. The increased teams for attendance and behaviour have had time to develop, and there is funding allocated to ensure that these teams are more permanent. My focus during this visit was primarily on the ways in

which you are seeking to build a respectful culture and develop positive behaviour and attitudes across the school.

During my visit, the site was calm and orderly. Lesson structures that had recently been introduced when I visited in January have now been more consistently embedded. This is helping to develop positive routines in lessons. Pupils understand what is expected of them. The relationships and interactions between staff and pupils that I saw were positive and respectful. Social times were well managed.

You have recently introduced a 'dismissals' strategy to ensure that the transition from social times to lessons is calm. Pupils and teachers that I spoke with commented that this had improved behaviour in the corridors during lesson changeovers. There is, however, some loss of lesson time because of this strategy. You are aware of this and know the system needs further refinement.

Scrutiny of records relating to behaviour show that the numbers of pupils being suspended and accessing the school's 'seclusion' room continue to fall. While these numbers remain high, they are falling quickly. This trend had started during my visit in January and has gathered pace since then. You, your leadership team and wider staff teams use the data available to plan appropriate interventions to support particular pupils to improve their behaviour.

Conversations with pupils and staff suggest that there is further work to do to ensure that behaviour is consistent across the school. Pupils comment that behaviour in lessons is inconsistent, especially when regular teachers are absent. Pupils also report that derogatory language, especially homophobic, misogynistic and transphobic language, is heard too often and sometimes targeted at pupils. You are aware of this. The personal, social and health education curriculum has specific aspects focused on addressing pupils' attitudes in this area. Leaders and other staff spoke about an educational, rather than a punitive, approach to dealing with this issue. This work remains crucial to building respectful attitudes towards all pupils who attend the school.

Absence and persistent absence remain high. You know this and are dedicating significant resources to address this. Since my last visit, the large team working to improve attendance has started to use data very precisely to track groups and individuals. This leads to precise support for pupils and their families in order to encourage good attendance. There is evidence that these strategies are beginning to have an impact. Attendance for younger year groups is rising quickly compared to last year. Case studies show that your work is helping some of the most vulnerable pupils to attend school more regularly.

Governors and trustees are aware of the challenges that still face the school. Significant resources from the trust continue to be dedicated to supporting improvement. Your appointment as permanent principal has brought stability to the leadership team. Associate principals from the trust provide regular support. You engage external support, including from the local authority, which is helping to build a strong network around the

school. At all levels, from leaders to staff to pupils, there is a shared belief that the school has improved from the position it was in last year.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of York, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Kingston upon Hull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Vellensworth
His Majesty's Inspector