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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Andrew Booth
Executive Principal
Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey
Minster Road
Minster-on-Sea
Kent
ME12 3JQ

Dear Mr Booth

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 18 July 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 require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place June 2022.

During the inspection, Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Stephen Long HMI, Michelle Lower HMI and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chair of the trust board, the chief executive officer (CEO) and other officers of Oasis Community Learning 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. We visited lessons, spoke to a wide range of pupils, looked at pupils' work and observed pupils' behaviour. We scrutinised school documents, talked to many staff and took into account the responses to the staff, pupil and parent surveys. I have considered all of this in coming to my judgement.

Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last monitoring inspection in March 2023, 16 new members of staff have joined the school. A total of 26 members of staff are leaving at the end of the summer term and you have recruited 22 people to replace them. The Department for Education is still seeking a new multi-academy trust to sponsor the school.

You have ensured that leaders continue to raise expectations for pupils' learning and achievement. Leaders have designed a structured curriculum with a clear rationale for what is being taught and when. Where teachers' subject knowledge is strong and they use effective strategies in lessons, pupils are developing a deeper understanding and acquiring more secure knowledge. This is most effective in the sixth form. However, leaders' ambitions are not being realised fully enough in practice yet. Some pupils' achievement remains weak. Pupils often struggle to articulate what they are learning or how this connects to previous lessons. Many pupils have gaps in their knowledge, largely because they have been regularly absent. Teachers' checks on pupils' progress are not identifying these gaps systematically enough. Too often, therefore, pupils do not catch up with any missed learning.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is variable at best. Some pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers in routine lessons. Staff do not know all pupils' additional needs sufficiently well. They do not make regular and effective adaptations in lessons to support pupils' learning. Other pupils are taught in additional provision in the school, for example 'Inspire' and 'The Oak'. These pupils do not experience a curriculum that meets their needs fully and prepares them consistently well for their next steps. Additional support for pupils who are weaker readers is having a more positive impact, although this would benefit from further precision. You are aware that this crucial aspect of the school's work needs to improve more rapidly, especially given the high proportion of pupils with SEND who attend the school. You have plans in place to address this urgently.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development continues to improve. This is having a positive effect on the culture of the school, although there is more to do. The majority of pupils feel that they are taught to respect others. Incidents of bullying are decreasing. Pupils feel largely safe in school. Most pupils are confident about reporting any concerns they have to staff and that issues will be dealt with. Pupils can now participate in specific workshops to help them deal with any difficulties they may be facing. Advice and guidance for pupils about their future careers and education are improving. Leaders are broadening the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities on offer for pupils.

You have rightly prioritised improving pupils' behaviour. Low-level disruption in lessons is reducing. It is now a minority of pupils who cause problems. Although the frequency of these pupils being removed from lessons for disruptive behaviour is decreasing, it still remains too high. Some pupils truant from lessons. Pupils are generally more compliant in lessons, but they often do not have positive attitudes to their learning. Work to engage

and interest pupils more is underway but is at an early stage. Staff receive better support for managing behaviour. While expectations are not yet implemented fully across the school, staff are dealing with unacceptable behaviour and using sanctions appropriately more often. Pupils recognise this change. Pupils' behaviour outside of lessons is also improving overall. The number of suspensions has fallen since the last monitoring inspection. However, there are still issues, mostly some pupils' use of derogatory language. Older pupils at the Minster Campus behave better overall than younger pupils at the Sheerness Campus.

Pupils' attendance remains a major concern. Rates of absence are still high, meaning that many pupils miss out on important parts of their education. You have made sure that the school is now fully focused on reducing pupils' absence. Importantly, you have increased the number of staff who are supporting pupils to attend regularly. Additionally, leaders have introduced a new system of 'attendance advocates', through which members of staff support individual pupils who attend school the least. These strategies have led to some clear improvements. While attendance overall has only risen marginally since this time last year, the proportion of pupils who are persistently or severely absent is falling. You plan to use these approaches for a wider range of pupils during the next academic year. This is vital, as the rate of improvement in pupils' attendance must accelerate sharply.

You are increasingly gaining the confidence of parents and staff. The majority of staff feel that the school is well led and managed. They also recognise that they are supported with their workload and well-being. Most staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that the school is heading in the right direction. This is mirrored by the views of many parents. Leaders use feedback from the 'parents' forum' well, which means parents who proactively engage with the school have a say in its future direction. Some parents remain concerned about pupils' behaviour and how well their children's needs are known and met. Overall, however, there is more optimism about the school's improvement.

Trustees and other trust leaders know the school well. They have a realistic and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They also know what the current priorities are, including the central challenge of raising pupils' attendance more rapidly, and monitor the school's progress closely. Trustees continue to invest significantly in improving the school. This includes increasing leadership capacity and investing in retaining effective staff. Expertise from across the trust is used to support many aspects of the school's development, including improving the curriculum and how it is implemented. Training for teachers is focused on the right things. You and other leaders recognise that this training now needs to have more impact on the quality of pupils' experiences and learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of Oasis Community Learning multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
His Majesty's Inspector