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27 February 2019

Miss Nicky Broomhall  
Principal  
All Saints National Academy  
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Walsall  
West Midlands  
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Dear Miss Broomhall

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints National Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 6–7 February 2019, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in May 2018.

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.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's post Ofsted action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local academy committee, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the

director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2018.**

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - swiftly clarifying roles and responsibilities for the leadership of the school
  - tackling quickly, systematically and effectively the weaker teaching which continues to inhibit pupils' progress
  - managing the performance of teachers effectively
  - developing the capacity to support and challenge leadership at all levels
  - improving both the core and wider curriculum so that planned learning successfully builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, meets the needs and interests of pupils and enables them to make good progress
  - ensuring that the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supports them to make good progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - teachers are equipped with a deep understanding of how pupils learn and strong subject knowledge that will support them in delivering high-quality learning for all groups of pupils
  - all teachers plan a coherent teaching sequence which enables pupils to deepen and develop their skills and knowledge over time, building on prior learning
  - all teachers insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' work and tackle errors and misconceptions at the earliest opportunity.
- Raise pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
  - pupils rapidly acquire and deepen their comprehension skills in reading
  - pupils have frequent opportunities to develop and deepen their skills in writing in a range of subjects and genres
  - teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their calculation skills to investigate, solve increasingly challenging problems and develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Work closely with parents so that attendance levels rise and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 6 February 2019 to 7 February 2019**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the principal, three assistant principals, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and her assistant, the school attendance officer and the local authority attendance officer. She also met with three trust members, including the chief executive officer, and three members of the local academy committee of the St Chad's Academies Trust. The inspector spoke with parents after school and with pupils during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector visited all classes with the principal and examined a wide variety of pupils' workbooks. She scrutinised a range of documents. These included those relating to pupils' achievement, attendance, staff performance and safeguarding. The inspector considered the school action plan and various subject leader plans, together with reports of reviews and visits carried out by members of the trust.

### **Context**

There have been significant changes to staffing and senior leadership since the previous inspection in May 2018. The previous principal and six teachers have left the school. As a result, the trust has created a new leadership team. A total of 11 new staff members were appointed in September 2018, including a new principal and three assistant principals. A new SENCo, assistant SENCo and attendance officer have also been appointed. Most of the newly appointed staff teach in key stage 2.

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

The new principal has been the catalyst for significant improvements since the previous inspection. She is supported by three able and enthusiastic assistant principals. All leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The new leadership team has added to and strengthened the leadership capacity within the school.

Members of the trust, at both strategic and local academy committee level, work closely with leaders. Together with the principal, the trust has drawn up a comprehensive action plan, identifying how it will support the school over the coming months. This plan identifies appropriate and timely actions addressing the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report. As a result, leaders receive effective support and training in their roles. However, to date, actions taken have not been evaluated or linked to their impact on teaching and outcomes. While notable improvements are being made, leaders' evaluation of the school's current position is overgenerous.

Due to very high levels of staff absence last year, the recruitment and retention of staff for the current academic year has been a key priority. Quite rightly, the principal has focused on raising staff morale. She has established a culture of collaboration, trust and mutual respect. Previous turbulence in staffing and staff absence has been reduced. Staff understand the school's priorities well and value the support they receive. Parents and carers appreciate the improved stability in teaching.

A significant restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team has been undertaken. The three new assistant principals understand the priorities for the school well and provide effective leadership in key areas, including English, mathematics and inclusion. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the challenges the school faces. They have clear plans of action and monitor different aspects of the school regularly. Greater attention now needs to be paid to reviewing the impact of the actions taken and to focusing on the progress of pupils with different abilities.

The principal and leadership team regularly review the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have implemented support plans for staff whose performance is a concern. Regular meetings, formal lesson observations and stringent targets are set to ensure that teachers meet the required standard. Additional coaching, mentoring and training are provided to enable staff to improve their practice. Challenging annual targets are also set for all staff members, both teaching and support staff. Targets are linked to the teachers' standards and the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. These targets are monitored carefully and used in conjunction with pupil progress meetings to hold teachers fully to account. Leaders are continuing to monitor the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils achieve well and that their individual needs are fully met.

All teachers have had support with lesson planning and a common format is now used for all lessons. The design and implementation of the curriculum has also been overhauled, with long-term and medium-term plans in place for each year group. Exciting topics such as 'Would a dinosaur make a good pet?' stimulate and capture pupils' interests and imagination. 'Stunning starters' and 'fabulous finishes' add variety to pupils' learning and enable them to build on and develop their skills and knowledge in a fun way. Extra-curricular activities have also enriched pupils' experiences. For example, all pupils go on a school trip linked to their topic work. Wider opportunities presented include specialist music and sports teaching. All pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 learn to play a musical instrument and perform in front of an audience. Many learn new sports skills, which aids their enjoyment of the school.

Leaders' identification and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been a priority. The inclusion leader, SENCO and special educational needs assistant work well together as a team. Improved systems and

provision are in place to identify pupils with SEND and meet their needs. All pupils are assessed using age-related tests to provide accurate information about their starting points. Intervention programmes, additional adult support and liaison with appropriate external specialists provide valuable support for pupils who require it. A nurture group provides assistance for those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Tailored equipment, such as blue feint exercise books, helps pupils who are dyslexic. Parents speak highly about the improved recognition of, and support for, pupils with SEND.

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

Significant weaknesses remain in teaching, but there are some emerging strengths. For example, there is strong practice in Year 6, where teachers use effective questioning skills and detailed subject knowledge to challenge pupils. However, the overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is not consistently strong enough to raise attainment securely and improve pupils' progress. One of the prime reasons why pupils' attainment is low and their progress over time has been limited is the legacy of weak teaching and staffing absence. As a result, too many pupils in all year groups need to catch up on previously lost ground.

A wide range of training has been provided for all staff, both teaching and support staff. Much of this has been focused on the development of reading, writing and mathematics. Class texts have been introduced and are used during guided reading time. A love of reading is also promoted through daily reading time, the creation of a new library, and the purchase of new and attractive reading books. Support staff hear individual pupils read in school and check that books are appropriately matched to their reading level. Teachers also read to classes regularly to model reading for pleasure. Strategies such as these are beginning to help raise standards, and most pupils who read to the inspector could do so fluently.

In order to improve pupils' writing, a new handwriting policy has been devised and a new writing scheme introduced. The process of planning, drafting and publishing a piece of writing is in the early stages of development across the school. There is good coverage of different types of writing, for example writing a balanced argument. However, the overuse of worksheets, adult support and writing frames restrict pupils' abilities to write at length or independently. This limits pupils' progress. Pupils' presentation of work in their books is improving slowly but is not yet of a consistently good quality across the school.

A new mathematics scheme has been introduced and this helps teachers plan an appropriate sequence of lessons. Additional resources and equipment are used well to support pupils' mathematical development and help pupils visualise numbers and patterns. A greater focus on problem-solving activities is evident in lessons and workbooks. Nevertheless, too often, work set is not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. For some, it is too easy and for others too hard. For example, work on telling the time in key stage 2 books shows a lack of challenge for middle and

higher-ability pupils; key stage 1 pupils with special educational needs struggled to add three sums of money together, because they lacked the skills needed.

A new marking and feedback policy has been introduced and work checked in books shows that this is mostly used consistently across the school. Pupils understand the policy but do not always respond to comments made by staff. This is because they are not given time to do so and teachers do not check that pupils have acted on the advice given. Sometimes, marking in mathematics is not precise and accurate. Several books checked show that adults tick calculations that are wrong. This reduces the accuracy of teacher assessment and their knowledge of pupils' abilities.

Historically, assessment information has not been accurate or reliable. Extensive internal and external checks are now used to ensure that teacher assessments are accurate. Standardised tests in English and mathematics are also used to supplement and support teachers' judgements. As a result, teachers are becoming increasingly confident and secure in determining whether pupils are working at age-related expectations. Leaders collate and analyse attainment information well. However, a system has not yet been devised to measure or track pupils' progress. This prevents staff from detecting which pupils are falling behind and where additional support is needed. Additionally, leaders do not focus sufficiently on the progress individual, or groups of, pupils make when they observe lessons and carry out book scrutinies.

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

Pupils try hard and pay attention during most lessons, even when work is not matched to their needs. However, much of the behaviour in lessons is compliant and too few pupils demonstrate resilience, independence or positive attitudes to learning. On too many occasions, pupils do not produce enough work in lessons. This is permitted by some teachers who, on occasion, allow pupils to engage in play-based activities instead of formal work. This is the case in some key stage 1 classes, where teachers feel pupils need more personal and social development opportunities. However, this is to the detriment of pupils' academic development.

Where teaching is effective, pupils concentrate well and for sustained periods of time. They listen attentively and respond to questions politely. In lessons where teaching is less effective and work is undemanding, pupils call out and the general noise level is too high. This prevents the learning environment being positive and productive. Behaviour around school is mostly good but occasionally at breaktime pupils run in and out of school and are allowed to do so because adults do not patrol corridors.

Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems in place to monitor the attendance of all pupils. There are rewards for individual pupils and classes when their attendance is above 96%. In addition, to encourage them to bring their children to school regularly, parents receive vouchers to spend on school activities.

However, attendance remains below the national average and leaders are aware that persistent absence remains too high.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

In 2018, attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results were well below average in writing in key stage 1 and in all subjects in key stage 2. Progress was also significantly below average and in the bottom 20% nationally. Most pupils failed to make good progress from their starting points.

Attainment at the end of the early years remains below the national average. In 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was the same as 2017, so no improvement was evident. There are wide gaps between the attainment of boys and girls. Girls achieve much higher standards than boys in all areas of learning, except technology. The widest gaps exist in literacy, exploring and using media and materials, and being imaginative. These differences in attainment mean that boys are less well prepared for Year 1 than girls and need additional support early on.

The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose in 2018 compared to 2017. Results were closer to the national average, but still below average.

The school's own assessment of pupils' attainment and work in pupils' books show that most pupils are working below age-related expectations in all subjects. Standards are particularly low in writing in most classes and reading and mathematics in key stage 2. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic skills remain a challenge. For example, pupils' application of phonic and spelling rules in their writing is weak. Poor grammar, such as 'I creeped through the hole', also detracts from the quality of pupils' work.

### **External support**

The trust and local academy committee have provided effective support. Members hold all leaders to account well. Termly raising achievement boards and monthly progress board meetings are used effectively to monitor progress towards the areas identified at the previous inspection. The principal provides detailed reports on all aspects of school improvement. Academy reviews and visits from the diocesan improvement adviser also ensure that information is gathered first hand and validates the principal's views.

The school buys into services provided by the local authority for attendance and inclusion. Both services have provided valuable support for the school leaders. Attendance officers help analyse patterns and trends in school absence figures and follow up pupils who are persistently absent. Weekly meetings are held with the



education welfare officer to discuss priority cases and advise on actions needed. Effective support by the local authority inclusion service has also ensured that a greater number of pupils have been assessed and diagnosed. This has enabled the needs of some individual pupils to be met more appropriately.

**In addition to the areas for improvement identified, leaders should:**

- ensure that differences between the attainment of boys and girls are diminished in all areas of learning, but especially in literacy and expressive arts, designing and making.