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28 November 2023

Chris Reynolds  
Principal  
Archbishop Sentamu Academy  
1 Bilton Grove  
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Dear Mr Reynolds

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Archbishop Sentamu Academy**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 21 November 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in May 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, 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 and observed social times, including the 'dismissals' system. I met with staff and pupils both formally and informally and scrutinised records related to behaviour and attendance. I also looked at the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and visited the 'empower' provision which has recently been introduced. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as having serious weaknesses.**

**The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

Since my last visit in May 2023, there has been further work to strengthen the pastoral team in the school through the addition of two new members of staff. This visit focused primarily on the work you have done to address concerns around behaviour and attitudes that were raised during the inspection in May 2022.

During my last visit, you had recently introduced a 'dismissals' system to ensure an orderly transition from social times to lessons, and to manage behaviour in corridors and social spaces more effectively. This system is now more thoroughly embedded and is ensuring that pupils arrive at lessons ready to learn. You continue to ensure that there is a clear plan for staff, including senior leaders and behaviour support staff, to be present on corridors. This means that staff feel supported in managing behaviour in lessons and that any pupils not in lessons are challenged appropriately.

In the lessons I visited, all staff were using the 'connect' framework to ensure that pupils were given opportunities to revisit previous learning. The atmosphere in lessons was mostly positive. Where there was low-level disruption, this was isolated to a small number of pupils. Behaviour at social times was also calm and orderly. Behaviour records show that the numbers of pupils being suspended or learning in the 'seclusion' room continues to fall. You are aware that there is more work to do. Despite the progress made, the numbers of suspensions remain high and, sometimes, the attitudes of some pupils towards staff can be disrespectful. There is no complacency among leaders in aiming to tackle these issues.

The curriculum for PSHE that was being developed at my last visit has now been implemented. It clarifies the important content that pupils need to learn and, alongside assemblies and tutor time, is responsive to the needs of the pupils. There has been a focus on tackling misogynistic attitudes in this work and there is some evidence that this is beginning to have an impact. Pupils that I spoke with said that derogatory language was less of an issue and most agreed that behaviour is improving.

A recent change has been the development of the 'empower' project. This means that the most vulnerable pupils access a bespoke package of interventions to help them learn the curriculum and return to mainstream lessons. Regular meetings between pastoral, curriculum, safeguarding and special educational needs teams look at the context of each child and the work done to support them. Individual interventions around behaviour, attendance and curriculum are then enacted for each child. This detailed work is part of the unified approach to ensure that a range of strategies are tried for pupils in different circumstances. Representatives from the local authority are positive about the impact this work is having in, for example, reducing suspensions for children known to social services. There is evidence that this work is having a significant impact in improving the attendance for some pupils who have been persistently or severely absent from school. Overall attendance remains low. The record keeping, use of data and connections across different areas of work mean that you are well placed to identify and act on this issue. There is evidence that this work is slowly beginning to improve attendance overall. You are aware that this work needs to continue to bring attendance towards national averages.

Your unified approach to removing the category of serious weaknesses extends beyond the school day and gates. Since my last visit, you have implemented more projects within the community. There has been a summer fair and a Christmas fair is planned. These help to celebrate the work of the school and provide opportunities to build positive connections with parents and carers. The programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities has been strategically developed and pupils' attendance and participation are tracked. This shows that many pupils are taking advantage of the clubs, trips and activities on offer. This work extends into a careers programme to highlight opportunities and raise aspirations for pupils when they leave Archbishop Sentamu Academy. This approach is helping to build positive attitudes towards school. It is giving pupils reasons to come to school beyond the academic curriculum.

Leaders from the trust offer regular and continued support. This is focused on attendance and, more recently, has turned towards curriculum development now that there are clear strategies and plans to tackle poor behaviour. At all levels, leaders understand how their work connects to the bigger picture of school improvement. While progress is being made, there is a shared understanding of the need to continue to refine and develop actions to ensure that pupils attending Archbishop Sentamu Academy receive a good education and that the progress made is embedded and secured.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of 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**