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11 May 2012

Mrs M Gallimore  
Headteacher  
St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise  
Berrys Lane  
St Helens  
Merseyside  
WA9 3HE

Dear Mrs Gallimore

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 May 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please forward my thanks to the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body for their participation during the inspection. In particular, I would be grateful if you would forward my thanks to your students for their help and cooperation during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 14 September 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The headteacher and other senior leaders fully recognise the need to accelerate and sustain pass rates at GCSE five A\* to C including English and mathematics. This indicator remains below the national average but maintains a trend of year-on-year improvement. Tracking and monitoring systems are now robust and lead to a wide range of interventions. Current progress tracking and scrutiny of Year 10 and Year 11 students' work indicate an improving trend at Key Stage 4. There has been a strong focus on improvement in mathematics and English and within both subjects there has been a significant increase in the number of students now making three levels of progress. Gaps in performance between groups of students, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, are narrowing. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has a stronger focus on developing literacy and numeracy and on building communication and learning skills to enable stronger foundations for the challenges of Key Stage 4 work. Many students enter the school with low reading ages which present barriers to learning. Recognising this, the school has instigated a stronger focus in Years 7 and 8 on the development of literacy skills. School tracking records now indicate that students are making more rapid progress in improving their reading ages. The school acknowledges that further work is required to develop literacy, numeracy, oracy and

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learning skills in Years 7 and 8. In particular, the school needs to encourage more challenging reading practice for students and to develop their oracy skills and confidence levels. Because of effective intervention strategies, attendance continues to improve and is currently just over 93%.

During the monitoring visit the inspector undertook a series of short visits or learning walks, to a range of subjects to assess the learning and progress students made. Much teaching was purposeful. Learning was conducted in stimulating classroom environments. Learning walks provided evidence of much student-centred activities. Lessons were well planned and teachers enthusiastic. In the best lessons students were stretched and challenged. Excellent development and reinforcement of literacy skills were observed in one science lesson. In a minority of lessons students were not sufficiently challenged to contribute and develop their ideas. These lessons lacked a degree of pace and students, while compliant, were less engaged. School records indicate that teaching has improved as a result of robust and effective intervention strategies. Effective coaching from external consultants has refocused approaches to teaching and learning. Teachers have responded enthusiastically to these interventions and to the regular learning walks and formal lesson observations conducted by the headteacher and her senior team. Students' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Students report that they feel safe. Students make a strong contribution to a harmonious educational community.

The local authority has played a strong and effective role in quality assuring new tracking and monitoring systems and in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority action plan, which was judged by HMI as fit for purpose, is on target and has had a positive impact in supporting the school to improve. The use of external consultants has been effective in developing improvement strategies across key aspects of provision.

The headteacher has a strong commitment to embedding a culture of continuous improvement. She is ably supported by a strong and well-focused senior management team. Tracking and monitoring systems are now robust with much improved data collection and analysis. Consequently, senior managers and middle managers have a greater focus on improvement. The management and use of data both by senior and middle leaders have improved but are not fully embedded in all classroom practice. The quality of teaching and learning is better monitored. The school self-evaluation has a strong focus on improvement and is accurate. The contribution of the specialism has been reviewed and includes additional responsibilities in developing communication, oracy and confidence skills across all provision.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mr Patrick Geraghty  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2011.**

- Accelerate students' progress so that it is more rapid, especially in English and mathematics, to prepare them better for their future economic well-being by:
  - making sure that teaching is at least good
  - making sure that teaching is consistent in matching tasks closely to the needs and abilities of different groups of learners
  - making sure that students are more actively involved in their own learning to promote their independent learning skills
  - making sure that leaders and managers are rigorous in monitoring the quality of students' learning and progress in lessons and use the outcomes to provide sharper focus on improving their quality
  - making sure that leaders and managers at all levels evaluate accurately the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work to provide a sharper focus in strategic planning on improving achievement.