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Mr M Jones
Acting Headteacher
Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College
Oakley Road
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Dear Mr Jones

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 October 2012, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by senior and middle leaders, teachers, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative of the local authority in speaking with me.

The headteacher left her post at the end of the summer term and an acting headteacher is in post for one year. Two assistant headteachers have joined on permanent contracts, and an additional deputy headteacher has been seconded to the school for the autumn term.

As a result of the inspection on 24 January 2012, 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The 2012 preliminary GCSE results show a strong improvement in the proportion of students attaining five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. This has increased from 44% to 54%. Students who speak English as an additional language achieved better results than their peers. Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium also improved their results, and the gap between their performance and that of most other students has largely closed. Mathematics results were also much improved, and the progress students had made in

mathematics since joining the school was much higher than in previous years. The progress that students are making in English and mathematics during Years 7, 8 and 9 has also improved.

Students say that they are making more progress. They appreciate the starter activities that teachers now use, and the fact that this means they are engaged in their learning straight away. They value the debate that flows freely now that behaviour has improved, one example being the discussion of different ideas of creation in religious education. They have also enjoyed taking part in role plays in both English and sociology.

In two English lessons observed during the inspection, teachers developed the speaking skills of students of middle and lower ability outstandingly well. The students were challenged to analyse texts at a deep level and in ways that led to them participating fully, thinking deeply and articulating their ideas in small groups and to the whole class.

The quality of teaching is improving across the school as a whole. In particular the good pace and challenge in lessons keep students engaged. Students have more opportunities to take an active role in their learning. Some questioning by teachers is skilled, although in some classes teachers are not delving deeply enough into students' understanding. Now that data are much more available and better understood, teachers' planning is better and they are matching work more closely to students' ability levels. In the lessons observed, teachers made the objectives clear and assessed students' progress against them later in the lesson.

Since the inspection in January, there have been times when the senior leadership team has been reduced in number. It is a credit to the senior leaders who led the school during these periods, and also the skilled support provided by the local authority and the other external partners, that the school did not slip back. Good progress has been made in all the areas where leadership and management were assessed as weak in January.

Subject leaders have become confident in their understanding of data. In particular, they intervene to support students when their progress falls behind for any reason. This applies also to groups of students, and in English some single gender sets have been created where data showed groups of boys falling behind. One of these sets was observed, and the boys were making good progress and catching up well.

The senior leadership team is now strengthened, and good progress has been made in developing the school's monitoring and tracking systems. Data are widely available to teachers directly, and pastoral leaders are also effectively tracking students' progress across subjects.

The consistent application of the school's behaviour system by teachers has made a significant impact. Students have noted the improvement in behaviour, and also that

their teachers have been able to deliver more interesting lessons as a result. Students particularly appreciate the rewards, which make them feel valued and have improved their self-esteem. Students say that there is still some occasional low-level disruption, but it is dealt with well and is relatively rare.

The governing body has reviewed all its ways of working and has received high-quality training from the local authority on how to hold the school to account. The new Chair of the Governing Body has been quick to ensure that all governors have a link responsibility, and a number of link visits have taken place.

The local authority, along with other external partners it has arranged, has provided good-quality support. Ofsted has already judged the statement of action as 'fit for purpose'. It has proved effective in guiding progress, and a monitoring group is ensuring that the action plan is being implemented. Teachers speak highly of the development opportunities provided by partner schools and consultants.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012

- Increase the rate of progress that all groups of students make, particularly in mathematics, from satisfactory to at least good by:
 - making sure that at the end of each lesson, students have a clear idea of what they have learnt, whether they have fulfilled their personal objectives and what they need to do to improve further.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better in most lessons by:
 - making sure that there is a closer match between work set and the different abilities of students
 - giving students more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be more active and inquisitive in class
 - ensuring all lessons are sufficiently challenging and move at a brisk pace.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that the governing body has the skills and knowledge to be better able to hold school leaders to account
 - developing the role of subject leaders so that all become accountable for students' attainment and progress in their respective areas
 - strengthening the senior leadership team to ensure that the improvements to the school's monitoring and tracking systems are sustained
 - ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently to prevent inappropriate behaviour from interrupting students' learning.