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22 July 2013

Mr David Hubbard  
Headteacher  
Corpus Christi Catholic High School  
St Vincent's Road  
Fulwood  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR2 8QY

Dear Mr Hubbard

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic High School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a secondary adviser coordinating the support provided by the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. The school's plans to include newly appointed staff on the single central record, which contains checks on staff appointments, were reviewed as part of a brief meeting with the school manager.

#### **Context**

The school's intake of students is falling. In September, 115 students are joining the school in Year 7 compared with around 170 in September 2012. A small number of staff are leaving at the end of term to take up positions, including some promoted

posts, in other schools. Nine new staff, including five teachers, will join the school in September with eight of these being temporary positions. There have been a few internal staff promotions including to the new posts of head of music and head of drama. Appropriate checks are in the process of being carried out to ensure that staff are suitably qualified to work at the school.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The headteacher started at the school two days before the inspection in April 2013. In the short time he has been at the school he has made a very positive impact on staff and students. His clarity of vision, high expectations and drive to improve the school are tangible. Staff are upbeat and their morale is good.

Straight after the inspection the school drew a line in the sand with regard to behaviour. It set its stall out clearly as to what is acceptable and what is not. As a result, the rate of fixed-term exclusions rose as the new systems were applied robustly and students learned to comply. Fixed-term exclusions are now dropping. Each of the 22 students identified, as at risk of further exclusion has a pastoral support plan.

A recent survey in which 24 members of staff gave their views shows staff are on-board with the changes planned and can already see the impact of the changes made to the way the school manages students' behaviour. The views of a small number of students have been surveyed and they, too, recognise the positive difference made by the headteacher, notably around behaviour. They say expectations of good behaviour are clearer and there is more consistent management of behaviour by staff.

There has been less impact as a result of the school's actions in tackling the other areas for improvement from the last inspection. This is understandable as systems needed to be introduced and changed. This work has been done and the school is now in a good position to hit the ground running in September. For example, the school's attendance policy has been revised and there are clear arrangements for holding tutors to account for students' attendance; any pupils with an attendance problem will feature in their form tutor's action plan. Parents will be regularly informed about their child's attendance using the school's new and challenging criteria for grading attendance as outstanding, good, requiring improvement and inadequate.

Three layers of input have been established to improve the quality of teaching. The aspects of teaching identified as needing to improve at the last inspection are being tackled through a whole-school training programme focused specifically on these. In addition, each individual teacher has been made aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching and all are to receive well-considered support to improve the quality of their teaching. Finally, each subject leader has been given information to show the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in their department

and they are being challenged and supported by senior colleagues and local authority staff to raise the quality of teaching in their areas.

Middle leaders are to be held much more to account through the school's revised monitoring and evaluation arrangements. For example, pastoral and subject leaders have been given exemplar self-evaluation reports, which they now have to emulate for their areas of responsibility. These will be used when a review team comprising the headteacher, another senior leader and two members of the governing body hold the pastoral and subject leaders to account. The preparatory work has been completed and a round of reviews is to commence in the autumn term.

The school's action plan is a good document that clearly spells out what is to be done, by whom and when. It has measurable targets that will show the school if it has been successful or not. Additionally, it contains challenging and ambitious milestone targets. Those for improving the quality of good and outstanding teaching are set for October 2013, March 2014 and September 2014 respectively. A recent audit of teaching, during which 50 lessons were observed, has given the school information about the current proportions of teaching that are good and outstanding. However, this is not being used to inform the targets for teaching in the school's action plan that were set when it was compiled much earlier this term. The headteacher appreciates the recent audit of teaching could be used meaningfully to set more realistic milestone targets that would further help governors to monitor improvements in the quality of teaching.

The local authority has shaped its statement of action around the school's action plan well to marry the support it provides to the tasks and targets the school has set itself. The adviser has facilitated and coordinated the support of advisory colleagues and consultants and support from a National Leader in Education effectively. She is playing her part well in helping the local authority and the governing body monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making. It was the adviser, along with another colleague from the local authority, who conducted the recent staff and student surveys to gauge their views as to how the school is moving forward.

The Chair of the Governing Body has a realistic appreciation of the role of the governing body in monitoring the school's action plan. To this end, governors have been allocated responsibilities for liaising with appropriate senior staff who are leading on each of the areas for improvement in the plan. These governors, along with senior staff and supported by the local authority make up a standards and effectiveness committee that is to regularly check on the progress being made. Governors want to play their full part. A good sign is that the school's action plan contains a target and associated actions to improve the way governors hold senior and middle leaders to account. This is despite this not being identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Interim Executive Director for Children & Young People at Lancashire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven

**Additional inspector**