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12 December 2013

Mr James Lancaster  
Headteacher  
Christ The King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre  
Stamford Road  
Southport  
Merseyside  
PR8 4EX

Dear Mr Lancaster

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Christ The King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre, Sefton**

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure the action plan identifies who is leading actions. Additionally the school should specify how impact is going to be evaluated and by whom, so that rapid development in all areas is sustained.
- ensure the training programme for teachers remains effective and focussed on the areas requiring improvement identified in the inspection by keeping it under continual review.

#### **Evidence**

Meetings were held with: you; subject leaders for English, geography, mathematics and PE; sixth form leaders; teaching and learning leaders; students and members of the Governing Body. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority. Improvement plans and other documents were evaluated. Samples of work from students in Years 9 and 11, and the sixth form were reviewed.

#### **Context**

A teacher has returned from a long term absence.

## Main findings

School leaders are ensuring that teaching improves. They are actively seeking outstanding practice in other schools. This is used as a model to improve weaker subject areas. School records indicate that this has increased students' progress in PE and it is increasing the confidence of teachers of the sixth form. The system for judging teachers' performance has been made more robust. Teachers' performance targets link to the whole school priority of improving the quality of teaching. Targets challenge teachers to ensure that students make at least good progress.

The evaluation of teaching has been reviewed. Lesson observation judgements had been inaccurate. Observations have been suspended for most teachers for a short period until further training of all involved has taken place. Other checks on the quality of learning including scrutiny of students' work and visit to investigate particular aspects of learning in a number of classes continue and have been strengthened. Clearer criteria for the quality of teaching allow both individuals and teams to identify what their immediate priorities should be. A programme of training for all teachers is further improving teaching although this needs to be kept under review to ensure it focuses on the school's highest priorities. All teachers are required to attend identified sessions, other, voluntary, sessions are also well attended. A 'School Learning Community' has been established. This wide-ranging group of teachers allows effective practice to be developed and shared.

Marking and feedback to students remain inconsistent. Planned actions to improve this aspect of teachers' work are at an early stage. The school reports improvement in assessment and marking following a recently concluded work scrutiny. This was not apparent in the sample of students' work reviewed.

Provision in the sixth-form has improved. The most able students are being challenged to think more deeply. They are expected to read a broader range of more demanding material. Visitors with professional careers are being used to raise the aspirations of students. Earlier assessment is used to ensure that Year 12 students have settled on their courses and are making rapid progress. This strategy has helped teachers to ensure that students work hard from the start of their courses. Where weaknesses in teaching have been identified, teachers are encouraged to increase their knowledge of examination requirements by becoming examiners in their subject. Adjustments have been made to course entry requirements to ensure that future sixth-form students follow suitably challenging courses.

Leaders and governors are responding effectively to the inspection. They have planned a comprehensive range of activities to improve teaching and learning. The post-Ofsted action plan is detailed and commits the school to a large number of intended actions. However, it does not identify who has responsibility for ensuring actions happen nor how these will be evaluated and who will do this. It is therefore not clear how leaders will ensure that development will be sufficiently rapid. The plan does not have a tight and published timescale. Without this, it is not certain that all actions will be completed in a systematic way. Subject leaders express confidence in the changes in the school and recognise how their skills are being enhanced. The school's systems for tracking students' progress identified improved achievement in a number of areas which have now been confirmed with the national publication of results. Identification of any students who may be falling behind and action to support them is more decisive.

Governors have asked more incisive questions of school leaders since the inspection. They have clearer expectations of their link activity with subject areas. They are using the recently re-planned cycle of committee meetings to provide systematic challenge and support to the school.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided good support to the school. Well planned links with other schools focus on appropriate areas of effective practice. These are making a good contribution to development at Christ the King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Sefton and as below.

Yours sincerely

David Selby

**Her Majesty's Inspector**