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Mrs Rose Howard-Rigby
Head of School
St Gregory's Catholic High School
Cromwell Avenue
Westbrook
Warrington
Cheshire
WA5 1HG

Dear Mrs Howard-Rigby

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Gregory's Catholic High School

Following my visit to your school on 2 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the head of school, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

A new temporary governing body was constituted on 28 February 2014. As of 28 March 2014 the executive headteacher is no longer at the school and you, as head of school are the senior member of staff. An interim headteacher has been

appointed for the summer term. Since the inspection the school has appointed a new site manager and assistant caretaker.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Although not expecting the outcome of the December inspection, leaders and managers accept that there had been insufficient scrutiny of some aspects of the school's work in the past and that there is room to develop and improve. The current leadership team understands the importance of sharing the good practice that already exists at St Gregory's to improve teaching and learning, so that all students can make good progress. The new temporary governing body is comprised of members who are highly experienced in school improvement, safeguarding and finance. They have a clear idea of what the school needs to do to move forward and are able to both support, and challenge the work of senior and middle leaders.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Senior leaders have produced a detailed improvement plan that focuses on the inspection findings. This has been shared with staff and with the governing body. The plan identifies the need to accelerate the progress of underachieving groups of students and this is linked to data analysis and strategies to improve teaching. However, to ensure that improvements are sustainable, and that all students feel valued, happy and safe in school, there are some issues raised in the report that need to be addressed throughout the plan. This includes culture, ethos and the development of the student voice. Those responsible for undertaking and monitoring the actions in the plan are clearly identified, as are the requirements for further support and associated resource implications. Senior and middle leaders are committed to making rapid improvements and to this end they have already begun working closely with advisers.

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

This is a well-considered document that is supported by a detailed support plan. The plan includes the funding of support of a senior adviser from the local authority; a human resources / business manager; a vulnerable groups and safeguarding manager; and a finance officer. The local authority has also funded and brokered support from subject leaders of education for science and the curriculum; two national leaders of education for vulnerable groups and behaviour, and teaching and learning; a national leader for governance; a subject leader of education and business manager from a local outstanding school; and an Archdiocesan adviser.

Early actions arising from the plan have met with approval from staff working with the advisers. They value their input which they recognise is already having a positive impact. Early reports from the advisers are insightful and specific in their recommendations for further actions.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The single central record meets statutory requirements for safeguarding.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Warrington and as below. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector