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Mrs J McGuirk
John Henry Newman Catholic College
Chelmsley Road
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30 April 2015

Dear Mrs McGuirk

No formal designation monitoring inspection of John Henry Newman Catholic College

Following my visit to your academy on 30 April 2015, 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 me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with academy leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the academy's previous inspection.

Standards of safeguarding remain very high. Moreover, in often very challenging circumstances, the highly effective leaders have ensured that many aspects of behaviour and attitudes are good. However, fixed-term exclusions are well above the national average and the academy's rigorous recording of behaviour incidents show that these are yet to be eradicated.

Context

With 1127 students on roll, this is a larger than average 11-18 academy. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is in line with that found nationally but less than the national average for those who speak English as an additional language. The academy is situated in an area of high deprivation and over 50% of students are entitled to free school meals. The number of students on the academy's register of special educational needs, or with statements, is below the national average.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The academy goes out of its way to ensure that their students are as safe as they can be. For instance, from June, leaders have employed a full time social worker because the level of need in the academy cannot be met through local authority provision. Teachers are exceptionally well trained. All have safeguarding and child protection training, including for Prevent. Teachers are also provided with training to meet the needs of students on the autistic spectrum. In addition, academy leaders have ensured that all staff are trained in attachment theory, child sexual exploitation, young carers, substance misuse and domestic abuse.

The systems that have been put in place by the academy's student services leader are designed to ensure that no student can slip through the net. Daily monitoring of behaviour incidents and attendance, and frequent sharing of such information, ensure that the academy is able to rapidly identify where problems may be emerging and that teachers are supported to meet the needs of students who may be experiencing problems. The academy's trained mentors, many of whom have psychology training, are a crucial part of the process. All students designated as vulnerable have a mentor who meets with them on a daily basis. Mentors also carry out frequent observations of their mentees in the classroom taking careful note of which strategies are working best and sharing these with all teachers.

Exclusions have been exceptionally high since the academy opened, particularly for disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs. However, although still above the national average, fixed term exclusions have reduced significantly over time for all groups as a result of the high level of support and intervention described above. Furthermore, the number of students with several fixed-term exclusions has reduced markedly. Moreover, at this point in the academic year, permanent exclusions are now below the national average.

Attendance has also improved and, overall, is now broadly in line with the national average. Although attendance of disadvantaged students remains lower than that of others in the academy, it is improving and constant review and evaluation of interventions inform leaders' subsequent actions. For instance, the academy is now providing a minibus which calls at the houses of each student with low attendance to collect them and bring them into school. Students expressed their appreciation of this.

The culture of the academy is one of high expectations and this, in conjunction with the care and support outlined above, has a very positive impact on the behaviour of

the vast majority of students. Students conduct themselves well in the academy at most times of the day, in classrooms and around the building. In most cases, students move between lessons sensibly and calmly, responding quickly to staff requests and to bells signalling the end of breaks. Staff are usually on the corridors to greet them at the beginning of lessons and this is helpful in ensuring that lessons begin promptly. However, it was noted that where this was not the case, lessons were slower to begin, particularly where students were not well-prepared for their learning.

Low level disruption is rare. Occasional off-task behaviour was seen where students were less engaged by their learning, but this was usually addressed quickly by teachers. Students agree that very few lessons are interrupted by poor behaviour, but point out that when it does happen it is with teachers who are considered to be 'less strict'. Nonetheless, they say such incidents are dealt with very quickly. They say that they understand exactly which behaviours will lead to sanctions and which will earn them rewards.

Students show respect for their environment when inside the building. No graffiti or litter was seen anywhere inside. However, this is not always the case outside. At break and lunch time, a number of students dropped litter wherever they were standing, including where a bin was nearby. Some rough horseplay, out of sight of supervising staff, led to ruffled tempers and bad language. Students say that behaviour can deteriorate in the afternoon because of such incidents at lunchtimes. However, behaviour seen in afternoon lessons during this inspection was very similar to that seen in the morning. Furthermore, the academy's monitoring of behaviour at different times of the day does not suggest that behaviour worsens after lunch.

Students are keen to talk to visitors and staff. It was notable how often they chose to have conversations with staff during breaks. The vast majority say that they are happy at the academy and all said they felt safe and cared for. Of those interviewed more formally, at least half had been previously excluded. All were very clear about how the academy is helping them to manage their behaviour in order to avoid repeated exclusions. One student stated that, 'I wouldn't still be in school if it wasn't for my mentor. I can talk to her about anything and she is always there for me.'

Priorities for further improvement

- Further reduce fixed-term exclusions to bring these in line with national proportions, particularly for disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and for those with more than one fixed-term exclusion.
- Continue to improve behaviour for all groups of pupils, particularly at break times.

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

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc Chair of the Governing Body (or equivalent)