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Mr Chris Davies
Headteacher
De Lisle College: A Catholic Voluntary Academy
Thorpe Hill
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Dear Mr Davies

**Short inspection of De Lisle College: A Catholic Voluntary Academy,
Loughborough, Leicestershire**

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 2017 with Dick Vesey, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vision is to give all pupils opportunities to achieve by working collaboratively. This, coupled with an accurate, honest and reflective view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, has led to improvements in outcomes for pupils since the previous inspection. Overall, pupils now make the progress that is expected of them and many exceed it. You are driven by a strong moral purpose to ensure that your pupils succeed. You make it your business to understand the barriers that pupils face and help them to overcome these. You are very well supported by a highly skilled governing body that continues to strive for the best for the school.

The school is a cohesive and inclusive community. It is characterised by pupils who are respectful to each other. They are polite, courteous and conduct themselves around the school with maturity. Pupils appreciate the caring, positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils; as a result, a harmonious environment exists. One pupil commented that, 'The teachers all help you whenever you need it.' Parents overwhelmingly recommend the school.

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with helping teachers to plan more effectively to meet the needs of pupils and with improving the effectiveness of questioning. Also, leaders were asked to ensure that the best teaching practice was shared and that subject leaders had the necessary skills to check the work of their

department. You have tackled these areas swiftly and effectively. The improved monitoring system used by your senior and middle leaders has helped to improve the quality of teaching significantly. You have ensured that teachers use this information to improve their planning; as a result, progress is improving. Leaders have identified best practice among your teachers and there are now weekly opportunities to share strategies on how to address the individual needs of pupils. However, you agree there is still more to do to ensure that all teachers use this guidance effectively to offer more challenge to all pupils, particularly those that are disadvantaged.

You and your team have worked relentlessly to make the school a safe and inclusive place to learn. Your documentation shows that you willingly take on many pupils from other schools, some of whom have complex needs. In 2016, the school's overall attendance rate was above average. The school has worked well with some groups of pupils who missed school for long periods. This has been effective, but you agree that the school must further improve attendance, and more rapidly, so that as many pupils as possible enjoy the good teaching.

You place great importance on ensuring that the quality of teaching is at least good. Staff at all levels told me that they value the changes you have introduced, particularly the focus you place on developing their skills and ensuring their well-being. The school's marking and feedback policy is now used consistently by teachers and is leading to higher standards. Together, we observed teachers using effective strategies to stretch the most-able pupils and teachers using questioning well to help pupils understand complex ideas.

You are ably supported by a passionate governing body, which shares your ambition for the school. Governors have a wide range of skills which they use to hold you and other leaders to account. They ensure that the checks made by subject leaders, on the quality of teaching, have a positive impact on practice and on pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that keeping pupils safe has the highest priority at your school and you 'live and breathe it daily'. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have ensured that all arrangements are fit for purpose and safeguarding records are detailed and of high quality.

The leadership of safeguarding is excellent. As a result, staff work diligently with parents and local agencies, such as the police and social services, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to support pupils whose well-being is at risk. Leaders also check regularly to see how effective this training has been. Consequently, parents and pupils are positive about the quality of care and support the school provides, especially for those who need additional help. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about keeping safe, through assemblies and lessons. An example of this is 'Kayleigh's Love Story', which has been used to teach pupils how to stay safe online. As a result of

this, pupils say that they feel very safe in school, and this view is overwhelmingly supported by the views of parents. Pupils told inspectors that instances of bullying are rare. When they do arise, pupils are very confident that staff deal with them swiftly.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have taken effective action in using pupil premium funding so that disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress. Strong collaboration between subject leaders and senior leaders has led to the successful implementation of agreed strategies to improve learning. Recently appointed staff have made a significant difference to the provision for disadvantaged pupils, particularly boys. We saw this when we looked closely at pupils' work, where progress for the disadvantaged was good.
- In 2016, overall attendance was above average, but below average for some groups of pupils. Your strong moral purpose and training has guided staff to work together to improve attendance for these groups. Mentoring and effective relationships with parents have improved the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the attendance for disadvantaged pupils is still not at the national average and you have plans to improve this.
- You have listened carefully to the views of pupils and staff, so that the choice of subjects at key stage 4 is now meeting the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is well designed and gives pupils a broad range of experiences and a good balance of academic and vocational subjects. The school's own internal assessment information shows that in the current Year 10, boys and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress. Pupils told inspectors how much they value the careers advice you offer them.
- You have been well supported by the governing body. Together, you have made the necessary changes to ensure that subject leaders are trained appropriately to check the work of their departments. These leaders told inspectors that they are challenged by your senior team to improve further teaching and learning. As a result, achievement across the school is good.
- In 2016, outcomes for the sixth form were lower than the national average. Leaders have worked effectively to raise expectations in the sixth form. We saw teachers using a wide range of strategies to engage students in the sixth form. The school's own internal assessment shows that standards will be much higher in 2017.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff refine the strategies to improve attendance so that disadvantaged pupils, who join the school mid-year, attend more frequently
- teachers embed strategies that challenge pupils more in lessons, particularly

disadvantaged pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Harkireet Sohel
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders and members of the governing body and trust. Inspectors held meetings with the senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, achievement and attendance. Along with a senior leader, we visited 13 lessons during the day. Inspectors spoke with two groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. We met with subject and pastoral leaders. We scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, and analysed data about the attendance, behaviour and progress of current pupils. We also considered 138 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the school's own records of parents' views. Inspectors also considered 70 responses to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.