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Mrs Linda Emmett
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Dear Mrs Emmett

Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints Catholic College

Following my visit with Jan Rowney, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 12 to 13 December 2017, 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 that you gave during the inspection and for the time that you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Smart
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2016.

- Ensure that leaders, and the newly reconstructed governing body, build urgently on the initial systems put in place to improve the school, so that the quality of teaching and behaviour of pupils is at least good across all year groups, by making sure that:
 - leaders at all levels bring about swiftly the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and behaviour in classrooms and around the school
 - the use and the impact of the pupil premium and extra literacy support for weaker readers in Year 7 is sharply monitored, in order that it improves the progress of those pupils whom it is intended to support
 - subject leaders are effectively trained and supported in quickly overcoming the legacy of weak teaching and poor behaviour in lessons and around the school
 - leaders in charge of improving attendance intensify their work with families to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent, especially in Years 10 and 11
 - parents and pupils feel well informed about changes in a timely fashion and have the opportunity to express their views.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics and the sciences, by:
 - raising the expectations that teachers have of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able pupils, so that they provide challenging and engaging activities in lessons and in homework
 - ensuring that teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' progress, set accurate targets and use the information in their planning to speed up pupils' progress
 - making certain that teachers mark pupils' work according to the school's marking policy, so that pupils receive the guidance they need to improve the standard of their work
 - insisting that pupils' skills in writing at length are of the highest quality across all subjects.
- Ensure that opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are not missed, by careful planning across subjects.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection from 12 December 2017 to 13 December 2017

Evidence

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, the librarian, parents, members of the governing body, trust directors and the director of schools for the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The lead inspector attended a teaching-and-learning briefing. In addition, inspectors held formal and informal discussions with a wide range of pupils from across both key stages. The lead inspector also held a formal meeting with the student leadership team.

As part of the inspection, inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, moving to and from lessons and during break and lunchtime. Additionally, inspectors jointly observed teaching and learning across a wide range of subjects and across both key stages. Alongside leaders and middle leaders, inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. Added to this, they examined a wide range of documentation. This included the school's improvement plans, safeguarding information, attendance information, behaviour records and documentation relating to teaching, learning and assessment.

Context

Since my last visit, leaders and governors have appointed one additional teacher to the modern foreign languages department and one additional teacher to the science department. Leaders have promoted a teacher of geography to lead the humanities department.

Staffing has stabilised significantly right across the school. Leaders now have a team of high-quality teachers who are fully committed to improving the quality of education that pupils receive. Pupils are highly complimentary about their school. They recognise the passion, commitment and dedication of their teachers. Older pupils say that leaders are in the process of transforming the school beyond recognition. Pupils are proud to belong to All Saints Catholic College.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and governors are unrelenting in their pursuit of excellence for pupils. They have fostered a team of staff that is dedicated, passionate and committed to improving the life chances of pupils. There is a strong, collective vision for sustainable improvement right across the school. Leaders and teachers can clearly see the effect of their work in every classroom. As a result, staff morale is extremely high. At this school, staff work closely together to fulfil the school's mantra to: 'Be inspired. Be excellent. Succeed.'

Since the school was judged to require special measures in 2016, leaders have successfully addressed many of the key areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. For example, they have secured significant improvements to pupils' behaviour and attendance. They have also significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are much higher. Each time I visit the school, the scope of the improvements that leaders have made is clear. Since the last monitoring visit, for example, leaders have empowered middle leaders to take full responsibility for their areas. They now have the required skills to improve further the quality of teaching.

Another area that leaders have successfully addressed is communication with parents. They have continued to develop the ways in which they keep parents up to date with their child's education. During the inspection, I spoke with parents about their views of the school. Without exception, the parents that I met felt that leaders have taken significant steps to improve the school. Parents were particularly pleased about the information that they received about their child's progress at parents' evenings.

Pupils also have a strong voice in the school. The student leadership team, for example, has responsibility for representing pupils at meetings with the headteacher. The student senior leadership team has formulated a 'rapid improvement plan' to show how it intends to grow and develop over the coming year. As part of the inspection, I spoke with a group of student leaders to assess how they can influence improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher agreed that this aspect of their work is still to be developed.

Leaders have also been successful in developing a strong personal, social, health education (PSHE) programme to support pupils' wider development. They ensure that teachers deliver a substantial PSHE programme across the curriculum. Pupils are also involved in planning PSHE events. In addition, they benefit from extremely good spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Leaders ensure that, where appropriate, teachers think carefully about how they incorporate SMSC development into everyday lessons.

Nevertheless, despite all of these improvements leaders recognise that to become a good school they must continue to secure consistently good outcomes for pupils across the curriculum. In particular, leaders have identified that there remain inconsistencies in the progress current pupils make in mathematics and science, particularly at key stage 3. We also spoke about ensuring that teachers routinely challenge the most able pupils across the curriculum so that they reach their potential.

Leaders and governors also understand that in order to achieve consistently good outcomes across the school, they should review their improvement priorities. The current improvement plan has been effective to date. However, to take the next steps leaders must ensure that their improvement-planning documents align closely

with their current evaluation of the school's effectiveness. We spoke about the need to include more challenging quantifiable measures of impact in order to secure even stronger improvements. This is to reflect precisely the key actions that will enable the school to be removed from special measures and become the best it can be at the time of the next inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve at each visit. For the most part, teachers have high expectations and aspirations for their pupils. Undoubtedly, pupils value the work that their teachers do to help them to learn. As leaders have stabilised staffing, they have been careful to recruit teachers who have strong subject knowledge for teaching. They have also ensured that teachers have the required skills to improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils. Across the school there is a sense of urgency about getting teaching right.

Leaders afford plentiful time to ongoing staff training. Morning teaching-and-learning briefings enable teachers to share best practice. Across the school there is a culture of support and collaboration so that teachers can share what works well for them. For example, teachers set frequent, personalised homework for pupils to enhance learning and progress. The strategies that they use increasingly enable pupils to achieve well. For example, pupils make strong progress in art, English, food technology, modern languages, performing arts and religious education because teachers design learning that meets their needs.

Nevertheless, leaders acknowledge that some teachers do not use the range of strategies available to them to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, some teachers only rely on different worksheets to support or challenge pupils to make good progress. Overuse of this one strategy can serve to stifle pupils' progress. During the inspection, we spoke about how teachers can develop a toolkit of strategies to ensure that pupils of different abilities make consistently good progress. For example, some teachers need further help to plan lessons that appropriately challenge the most able. Other teachers have not yet refined their questioning techniques so that they can address misconceptions and reshape learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders' systems to promote positive behaviour for learning across the school are effective. They pursue high standards of behaviour in every aspect of school life. Pupils and teachers recognise that the climate for learning is now positive. Once again, this is evident in the decline in the proportion of pupils that leaders exclude or temporarily exclude from school. The number of pupils in internal exclusion also continues to fall.

Teachers enjoy teaching and pupils enjoy learning. This is because most pupils

actively participate in lessons and focus well on their learning. They value their education. Where behaviour is the strongest, this is because teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of the range of pupils in their class. We spoke about the rare occasions where behaviour is not yet consistently good. This is when teachers do not plan lessons that sufficiently meet pupils' needs or where teachers' explanations of the concepts that pupils are learning lack clarity. As a result, a small proportion of pupils' attention begins to wander from their learning.

Across the school, pupils show courtesy and respect for each other. They are polite and considerate. They are proud to belong to All Saints Catholic College. During the inspection, I spoke with pupils who told me how much behaviour has improved, even since the last monitoring visit. They recognise the effect that a stable staff has on their learning. They said that they now attend more regularly because their teachers care for them, plan interesting lessons and pupils are respectful towards each other.

The systems for monitoring pupils' attendance are also robust. Leaders have made significant improvements to pupils' attendance. The proportion of pupils who attend school regularly is now in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school is well below the national average. No group of pupils is disadvantaged by low rates of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes remain the biggest barrier to the school being removed from special measures. Leaders' predictions for Year 11 in 2016/17 were accurate. Provisional outcomes for this year group are weak and are likely to fall well below the government's minimum floor standard. This is the minimum standard that pupils are expected to achieve by the end of key stage 4. This is because a legacy of poor-quality teaching, coupled with an inadequate curriculum and ineffective leadership and management, adversely affected the progress of this cohort earlier in their school career. In addition, too many pupils did not attend school regularly because they were disaffected. Furthermore, many short-term temporary teachers taught lessons outside of their subject specialisms. This resulted in significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Despite leaders' best efforts to bridge these gaps, the task was simply too big. Newly appointed high-quality teachers could not cover the content required for the GCSE specifications in the time available. The outcome was widespread underachievement in 2017. For example, in English and mathematics provisional information indicates that pupils' progress was well below that of other pupils nationally. From their different starting points, pupils' progress was also weak in science and humanities. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils did not improve in 2017.

Nevertheless, there were some noteworthy results. In modern foreign languages,

pupils' progress was very strong and they attained well. In science, a similar proportion of pupils attained a higher grade compared to other pupils nationally. Outcomes in art and design were excellent and pupils achieved well in religious education.

Leaders' analyses show that there were also other barriers to pupils' progress and achievement in 2016/17. For example, a significant minority of pupils did not want to engage with the new leadership team. Added to this, previous leaders had placed another group of pupils in alternative education due to behavioural problems. Consequently, these pupils did not have access to the full curriculum. These factors undoubtedly had a negative effect on the school's overall results. Those pupils who fully engaged with their teachers, attended catch-up sessions and completed their work to a high standard performed in line with other pupils nationally.

In contrast, current pupils' progress continues to improve. This is because of increasingly consistent high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers are proud of what their pupils achieve and pupils want to do their best. It is no longer acceptable to get by just doing the bare minimum. As a result, there is strong evidence that pupils make progress more closely aligned with that of other pupils nationally.

The quality of work in pupils' books is clear evidence in support of current pupils' progress. Over time, there is secure evidence that more pupils now make expected gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. This is because they engage well in lessons, take pride in their work and complete it to a high standard. Pupils' literacy has improved significantly and they write coherent, extended answers on a regular basis. They take ownership of correcting and improving their work through 'Golden Time'. During the inspection, we discussed how you will ensure that you achieve consistency in this aspect of teachers' work in line with your assessment policy.

Since the previous visit, leaders have taken effective steps to ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments of where pupils are in their learning. For example, almost every subject has a link with another organisation that marks, moderates and validates key stage 4 assessments. This external verification ensures that teachers' assessments are valid and reliable.

The progress made by current disadvantaged pupils continues to improve quickly. Leaders' own information shows that the differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. Leaders use the additional funding that they receive to good effect. They are taking effective action to address the barriers to learning that affect this group of pupils at All Saints Catholic College.

Leaders also ensure that the progress made by boys is more in line with that of girls. Robust monitoring procedures, including careful tracking, mean that leaders have an accurate understanding of where pupils are in their learning. For example, they have uncovered some variation between the progress of boys and that of girls

in Years 9 and 11. They have devised appropriate plans to address this imbalance.

The use of literacy and numeracy catch-up funding continues to be effective. Teachers and other adults effectively help those pupils who enter the school with literacy and numeracy levels below those expected for their age to catch up. Right across the school, pupils' literacy skills have improved significantly. Pupils increasingly read for pleasure. More recently, the proportion of pupils who borrow books from the library has increased dramatically. However, pupils' numeracy skills are less developed. During the inspection, leaders acknowledged that now is the time to increase pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills and fluency in mathematics right across the curriculum.

Nevertheless, there is still more to do to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the school, especially the most able pupils. Leaders acknowledge that teachers need to think even more carefully about how to plan for learning and progress for the range of pupils in their classes. In mathematics, it is now time to consolidate improvements to ensure that pupils make consistent progress across year groups and across sets. In science, at key stage 3, there is still some variation in the quality of work that pupils produce. Leaders also acknowledge that outcomes need to improve in computing and business studies.

External support

The leadership team continues to receive support from Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College, an outstanding school in Altrincham. Leaders also use a wide range of external partners to assure the quality of and moderate assessments of pupils' work. The headteacher arranges ongoing professional development opportunities for leaders at all levels, including aspiring leaders, in order to build leadership capacity across the school. The executive headteacher is a national leader of education who brings a wealth of experience to improve further the school.