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Anthony Corish
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Corish

Short inspection of The Douay Martyrs Catholic School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018 with Bruce Goddard and Lynne Isham, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment in September 2015, you have overseen a number of improvements which have had a positive impact on the overall progress pupils make and their attainment at the end of key stage 4. You have worked effectively to increase the number of pupils who are entered and achieve the English Baccalaureate with a strong pass. However, you are aware that those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make good progress when compared with national figures.

Your 'strategic' plan for 2017/18 contains 37 'key changes' including 'The Douay Ten', a set of 10 actions which are stated as 'improving standards of teaching and learning'. You have identified areas that require immediate attention. However, some of the stated actions are very general or not appropriate because they don't lead directly to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Other actions are in the very early stages of deliberation or are not being implemented swiftly enough. You do not specify how you will measure the impact of these actions in terms of pupils' progress. Many of the actions have not been effective, even though six months have elapsed since you identified them. This implies a lack of urgency. Most of the actions will not secure better progress for identified groups of pupils.

Governors fully support your work. They recognise that the improved governance structure has resulted in more efficient and regular communications with you. They are knowledgeable about the progress of different groups of pupils and the effectiveness of school procedures and processes. This is well documented in the minutes of governors' meetings.

On the day of the inspection, pupils were polite and willing to talk with inspectors. They reported that they know how to keep themselves safe, for example when travelling between the two sites and while using the internet. They spoke positively about the helpful support they receive from their teachers. Pupils cited the 'extra Saturday lessons' and 'registration interventions' as examples of effective additional provision. Sixth-form students spoke positively about their achievements, the quality of teaching they receive and the detailed information the school provides about apprenticeships. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said they would recommend the school to other parents. They also reported that the school produces 'clear progress reports that are easy to follow'.

During our initial meeting, we discussed your website, which did not meet the requirements on the publication of specified information.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding records are suitably detailed. You have established a culture of safeguarding across the school. You hold a weekly meeting with the chair of governors to brief her on any emerging safeguarding issues. All staff are trained to an appropriate level and receive regular safeguarding updates. They are aware of their statutory responsibility to keep pupils safe and have undertaken 'Prevent' duty training. Pupils causing concern are carefully monitored and appropriate referrals are made. Designated staff have been tenacious in their work with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school, and the majority of parents and staff agree. Your curriculum covers key safeguarding issues with pupils, including online safety, extremism and mental health and well-being. Staff are aware of risks in the wider community, including child sexual exploitation, and support pupils to keep themselves safe. This support and partnerships with external agencies are helping to address and improve pupil attendance.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to see how you and your leaders ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. This was because in 2017 some pupil groups, such as those who are disadvantaged, did not make as much progress as they did nationally. You have been successful in improving pupils' behaviour and recognise there is still work to be done so that pupils are more responsible for and engaged with their learning.
- Our visits to classrooms confirm your evaluation – that planned teaching, learning and assessment activities do not always enable pupils to maximise their progress. The lack

of challenge in both classwork and homework activities reduces pupils' progress. This is compounded when teachers do not adhere to school's assessment policy. As a result, there is limited evidence of pupils making strong progress over time.

- We next looked at the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This was because in 2017 examination results and progress scores for this group were markedly lower than national figures. You have ensured that a range of strategies, including a new reading scheme for Year 7 and 8 pupils and revision resources for Year 11 pupils, have been implemented.
- While discussing the progress for current disadvantaged pupils, we agreed that the monitoring and evaluation of these interventions, funded by the pupil premium grant, was not robust. Leaders are not clear on the difference made by the different strategies. You rightly acknowledge that the progress of this group needs to have a higher priority.
- The third area we looked at was the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This was because in 2017 their progress results were noticeably lower than national figures and in 2016 their attendance was low and their persistent absence high.
- The special educational needs coordinator has a systematic approach to personalising the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in Years 7 to 11. This leads to prompt and specific actions in identified subject areas. This includes the additional mathematics and science groups, which are skilfully taught by higher-level teaching assistants.
- Inspectors noted that the current progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is showing improvement. However, teaching is too variable across the school to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make consistently strong progress. The school does not have a clear understanding of the strategies required to improve attendance for specific groups of pupils because leaders do not ensure that attendance data is analysed in detail.
- Finally, we looked at the quality of sixth-form provision because for the last two years students' attainment has been below national figures. You have broadened your curriculum offer to include work-related courses such as law, business studies and information and communication technology. This has enabled more students, including disadvantaged students, to stay on in the sixth form at your school. Current trends indicate an improving picture for student outcomes. Sixth-form leaders have an accurate understanding of students' progress both in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education at the school
- they check carefully that improvement plans are timely, urgently address the areas requiring further improvement and have a positive impact on pupils' progress

- they improve the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum so that pupils progress rapidly
- the school's assessment system is consistently adhered to so that pupils know how to improve their work
- they evaluate robustly the impact of initiatives for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that they make at least good or better progress
- they analyse attendance data carefully, so that identified groups can be supported to attend school regularly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Westminster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Follett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection the following activities were carried out:

- The inspection team visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work with you and other senior leaders across a range of subjects and year groups.
- We met with you, senior and middle leaders, the attendance officer and groups of pupils.
- We spoke with the chair of governors.
- We observed pupils' behaviour around the school during break and lunch times.
- One inspector listened to four pupils from Year 7 read.
- 110 parents responded to the survey and we analysed their views.
- We looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, strategic plan, pupil performance data, safeguarding records and policies.
- I undertook a review of the school's website.