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21 May 2019

Mr Paul Brockwell  
St John Fisher Catholic High School  
Hookstone Drive  
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North Yorkshire  
HG2 8PT

Dear Mr Brockwell

### **No formal designation inspection of St John Fisher Catholic High School**

Following my visit with John McNally, Stephen Crossley, Erica Hiorns and Tudor Griffiths, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 14 May 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils and the outcomes of some pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other senior leaders, heads of year and subject leaders and a group of teachers. Inspectors also met with several groups of pupils, including a group of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and a group of pupils elected to the student council. Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body and six other governors. Inspectors scrutinised curriculum information, pupil premium planning, assessment information, records of the use of derogatory language and bullying and external reports from the local authority and other external partners. Inspectors visited lessons across key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form to gauge the culture and climate around the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and at social times to gather their views about the school's work to foster their personal development and welfare.

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

safeguarding is effective.

### **Context**

St John Fisher Catholic High School is larger than the average-sized secondary school, with around 1,460 pupils on roll. Most pupils are White British. Around 15% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. There are relatively few pupils with SEND and few pupils have an education, health and care plan. The previous headteacher and two other senior leaders left the school last summer. Since then, a temporary headteacher has led the school. The governors intend to begin the recruitment of a substantive headteacher in the autumn term 2019.

### **Safeguarding**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Appropriate checks are made on adults who work in or visit the school. At the start of the inspection, not all the statutory information required to be included on the single central record was in place. Leaders were able to correct this error during the day so that, by the afternoon, the single central record met statutory requirements. Members of staff across the school have a good understanding of how to report any concerns they have about a child's welfare. Their training on safeguarding has ensured they know how to recognise the signs of abuse or neglect. Most teachers have received training on the 'Prevent' duty, although some teachers who are newer to the school have not had this training as part of their induction.

The well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum ensures that pupils learn about the different risks they face. Pupils are actively encouraged to come forward and report any concerns about their own or someone else's safety. Pupils have confidence in the staff. When concerns are identified, leaders act promptly. They maintain detailed records of the actions they take. They work effectively with parents and carers and other external partners to achieve positive outcomes.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Following a complaint about pupils using derogatory, racist language, leaders and governors have listened carefully. They recognised the school's work on equalities did not have enough status, and, consequently, they acted to ensure that a more robust approach to equalities was a key priority in their school development planning. This has led to a range of well-considered actions to raise everyone's awareness of equalities, discrimination and protected characteristics. Leaders have

worked with the local authority to conduct an equalities review. Following the review, they revised the school's single equalities scheme to be more ambitious and to ensure that the progress and attainment of more groups of pupils, including ethnic minorities, is closely monitored. Leaders have revised the behaviour policy and made sure pupils understand that the use of derogatory language will not be tolerated. Assemblies, PSHE lessons and drop-down days have focused on equalities issues. For example, pupils across Years 7 to 10 and some of their parents have recently attended workshops with an external speaker to learn about transgender issues. Leaders are also building links with schools in more culturally diverse communities, to better prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

Inspectors found pupils of different ages to be well-informed, articulate, respectful and tolerant of one another. Pupils told inspectors they felt confident to be individual and able to express their own identity in school. Inspectors found pupils' behaviour and conduct to be of a high order.

Nevertheless, leaders are vigilant. They have encouraged pupils to report any use of derogatory language and records suggest that pupils are increasingly confident to do so. The school's records are well-maintained and show that swift action has been taken, involving parents, to deal with any incident. Leaders have successfully used restorative justice approaches to educate pupils about the damaging impact of racist or homophobic language. Fixed-term exclusion has been used as a sanction where appropriate. Incidents of derogatory language have declined. Governors have monitored records carefully and noted that the school's actions have prevented any repeat offences.

The school's carefully considered policies and curriculum are making a highly positive contribution to pupils' personal development and welfare and are ensuring pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

## **Outcomes**

The school has continued to be high performing. In recent years pupils have continued to make significantly more progress across a broad range of subjects than seen nationally. Overall standards of attainment at the end of key stage 4 are high. Last year, around 80% of pupils were entered for the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate, with success rates being well above those seen nationally. A high proportion of pupils attain a good GCSE pass in both English and mathematics. Almost all pupils progress into education, employment or training after Year 11.

Last year, disadvantaged pupils who completed key stage 4 made more average progress across a broad range of subjects when compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders have looked carefully at the reasons for this. They have reviewed their use of the pupil premium and revised their planning to ensure that the best possible use is made of the additional funding they receive. Planning is

detailed and thorough. Leaders ensure that there is additional support in place to help disadvantaged pupils achieve their potential. Much is done to understand the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face and there is an effective programme of mentoring which is helping to overcome these barriers. As absence from school was higher for disadvantaged pupils, leaders have allocated more resources to improving attendance. This year to date, the attendance of the disadvantaged pupils has improved and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who miss school persistently has declined markedly. The progress of every disadvantaged pupil in the school is tracked meticulously. The tracking data shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is close to or in line with that being made by other pupils. This suggests that the well-considered strategies being employed by leaders are reducing or eliminating barriers caused by disadvantage.

Leaders are also actively addressing the reasons why students on 16 to 19 study programmes made only average progress last year. Robust steps have been taken in subjects where rates of progress were weaker. Tracking data for this year indicates that more students are on track to attain the ambitious targets set for them. In lessons, students were actively engaged in learning and participated fully. They were articulate, enthusiastic and keen to talk about their work. Their files and folders are well organised, and they used independent study time diligently. Study programmes are broad, with a strong emphasis on personal development. The quality and breadth of study programmes help almost all students to progress onto appropriate destinations after the sixth form.

### **Leadership and management**

Following the departure of the headteacher and two other senior leaders last summer, the new senior leadership team is continuing to sustain the school's performance. They have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and are acting decisively to address any weaknesses. They have ensured that provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is strong. Leaders are responsive to changes in the school's context and have adapted policies and procedures accordingly. Consequently, the culture and climate for learning in the school support pupils effectively.

Leaders and governors are outward looking and welcoming of external scrutiny. They continually check on the impact of their actions and adapt and refine their plans accordingly.

The governing body is providing effective scrutiny of the school's work. The different committees have clearly defined roles and provide appropriate support and challenge. Link governor roles ensure that different aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding and the use of additional funding, are carefully checked.

## **External support**

The local authority has provided effective support to complete an equalities review. This has helped to shape the approach leaders have taken to raising awareness about equalities and ensuring that the rights of all groups with protected characteristics are actively upheld.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that safeguarding training on the 'Prevent' duty, is completed by all members of staff by the end of the summer term 2019.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**