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21 November 2019

Mrs S Smith  
Senior Executive Principal  
Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Academy  
Riversley Park  
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Warwickshire  
CV11 5TY

Dear Mrs Smith

### **No formal designation inspection of Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Academy**

Following my visit with Michael Appleby and Karen O’Keefe, Ofsted Inspectors, on 6 November 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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 the school has undergone a significant change since it was last inspected.

### **Evidence**

My team and I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and discussed child protection arrangements. We held discussions with the senior executive principal, principal and vice-principal and met with leaders responsible for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pastoral care and a range of curriculum subjects. We looked in depth at early reading, mathematics, writing, history and physical education (PE), including visits to lessons across the school. Meetings were held with teachers to discuss teaching, learning, workload and their well-being. I met with three governors, including the chair of the Education Standards Committee. I spoke to the chair of the board of directors on the telephone and also a representative from the Diocese. All the inspectors spoke to pupils about their work and talked to them at lunchtime. We spoke to parents at the end of the school day.

## Context

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Academy is an amalgamation of St Joseph's Catholic Junior School and Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Infant School. Governors changed the name of the school to Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Academy in March 2017, but it did not open as a new school on that date and therefore retained the legal standing of the junior school. St Joseph's Catholic Junior School became an academy in March 2015. The predecessor school was judged outstanding in September 2014. As a result of the Education (Exemption from School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2012, Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Academy is treated as an outstanding school, exempt from routine inspection. This is because the predecessor school was judged outstanding. This type of inspection does not change a school's overall effectiveness. It is a larger-than-average primary school, with 540 pupils on roll. Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to that found in most primary schools.

The pupils at Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Academy experience a rich, carefully planned curriculum that enables them to do exceptionally well. The broad balance of subjects combined with a wealth of highly stimulating opportunities ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Academic and personal development are equally valued and promoted. Every pupil is respected as a unique individual. Leaders have developed a strong, united staff team following the amalgamation. Despite being spread across three buildings, there is evidence of a well-established professional learning community. Staff work effectively together to plan and deliver a well-sequenced and carefully organised curriculum. Consistency across the school is evident in terms of the stimulating learning environment, the quality of education delivered and the high expectations from all staff. Pupils are supported, encouraged and challenged, and, as a result, make excellent progress and achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leadership across the school is extremely strong. Leaders demonstrate a collective moral purpose which shines through. They work with integrity, placing pupils and families at the heart of their decision-making. They are committed, dedicated and determined to ensure that every child enjoys their learning and excels. Leaders make regular checks on every aspect of the school's work to ensure that it is of the highest quality. They are ambitious for the school.

Senior leaders are skilled in spotting talent and developing other leaders. They empower others and support them to grow their skills. Careful thought is given to succession planning. New leaders, such as the recently appointed mathematics leader and leader for SEND, are effectively supported by more experienced specialist staff. Senior and middle leaders are highly effective and make an excellent, sustained contribution to school improvement. There is strong capacity for further development and improvement across the school.

Outstanding support and challenge are given to every member of staff. Staff value

the high-quality continuous professional development provided by leaders. Newly qualified teachers, in particular, receive excellent support and quickly become skilled, knowledgeable practitioners. The subject knowledge of classroom practitioners is excellent.

Teaching is engaging, and is underpinned by high expectations of every pupil. Professional partnerships between staff help them to reflect and continually improve their teaching. As a result, there are consistent approaches in place for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils of all ages and abilities are challenged appropriately.

The curriculum is extremely well designed and planned. Leaders ensure that it is rich and relevant and that regular reviews keep it up to date. It provides opportunities for pupils to revisit and revise what they have learned so that knowledge and skills are embedded. Individual subjects, such as history and science, are carefully planned. The knowledge and skills needed for future success are made explicit. Pupils enjoy their learning and relish opportunities to find out and explore. They are very keen to talk about what they know. For example, pupils in Year 3 talk in great detail about the different periods of the Stone Age and what life was like then.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is adapted to suit the needs of all pupils, including the most able and those with SEND. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and quickly adjust learning tasks in the classroom. Support for pupils is specific and highly effective. A mixture of approaches helps pupils to be successful. For example, grouping pupils according to ability in PE enables all pupils to gain a sense of achievement and experience the success of winning as they compete against pupils with similar skills.

Standards at the end of each key stage in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above national averages for a number of years. There was a slight dip in performance in 2017. Leaders were very quick to address the issues. Work was undertaken to ensure that the curriculum closely matches pupils' needs. Standards rose to where they had been and have risen again since. For example, disadvantaged pupils now reach standards above those found for all pupils nationally.

Pupils are very positive about their learning. They focus deeply and enjoy being challenged in their work. Pupils selected to be 'Agents of Ambition' on the learning council engage in dialogue with leaders about teaching and learning. Leaders take note of what pupils say about their learning in order to ensure that it meets their needs and interests.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school's Christian values are deeply embedded in the ethos of the school. They are evident in the daily actions of pupils and adults alike. Pupils of all ages cooperate and work extremely well together. They

demonstrate a deep kindness and empathise sensitively with others. Adults set high expectations and lead by example. As a result, pupils are well-mannered, considerate and friendly.

Leaders are deeply committed to providing a diverse range of opportunities in order to support pupils' personal development. Over time, they have created an exciting bespoke package to ensure that this happens. The 'Holy Spirit Experience' adds immense richness to the curriculum. It ensures opportunities for every pupil to develop resilience and character, and to acquire a deep cultural capital. Through their social action work, residential and cultural experiences, sporting opportunities and vocational work, pupils develop essential skills for life. Leaders ensure that the daily experience of every pupil builds over time and develops successful citizens.

The youngest children get off to an excellent start because of the high-quality provision across the early years. Staff provide exceptional care, support and encouragement. They know the children well, and they ensure that the curriculum meets their needs and interests. Consequently, children in the nursery are highly engaged in learning from the moment they step inside. This deep focus continues into the Reception classes, where children concentrate, persevere and think for themselves.

Governance is strong. It has evolved over time as the multi-academy company has expanded and developed. There is a very clear scheme of accountability in place. All those responsible for governance are exceptionally confident about their roles and responsibilities. Governors on the education standards committee are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They demonstrate a deep commitment and passion for the school, caring deeply about every member of the school community. They use their skills very well to support, challenge and hold leaders to account.

Parents are overwhelming positive about the school. Those who spoke to inspectors say that they are very well informed about their child's progress. Their children are happy, thriving at school and very well cared for. Parents are kept up to date about the curriculum their child is studying and what they can do to help. They are supported effectively and are considered to be joint partners in their child's education.

Safeguarding is effective. All members of staff demonstrate a high level of care for pupils and work together effectively to ensure that they are safe. Through this attention to individual need, staff notice when a pupil is anxious, worried or not quite themselves. They are quick to take action, provide help or seek additional support. They fully understand their responsibilities. Designated safeguarding leaders work well together. They are tenacious in following up concerns and ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are very well supported. Pastoral care in this school is of the highest quality; every member of the school community is valued for who they are, and they are supported to shine.

## **External support**

The diocesan board of education has a very strong relationship with the school. The school is viewed as being a flagship within the diocese due to the continued excellent provision, and leaders are regularly called on to support other schools. Within the multi-academy company, the school is seen as the engine house that is setting the standard and the pace, and is leading by example. The development of the multi-academy company enables leaders to share their good practice beyond the school. Leaders and staff work with integrity and a collective moral purpose, supporting others beyond their immediate school. They support willingly and enthusiastically, viewing every opportunity positively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of directors, the Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood

**Her Majesty's Inspector**