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Giselle Lynch
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lynch

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School

Following my remote inspection with Rachel Goodwin, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 27 and 28 January 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require special measures.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 2018.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- increase support for those subjects that are behind others to further develop the curriculum
- develop teachers' ability to identify and support pupils who may have gaps in their phonic knowledge
- develop the range of strategies used to support pupils with less complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including in relation to remote learning.

Context

- Since the last monitoring inspection in February 2019, the previous interim leaders have left the school. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in the summer of 2019. An executive headteacher was appointed to work at the school for the 2019-20 school year. Almost all senior and middle leaders have joined the school during the last 20 months. Many other teaching and non-teaching staff have either left or joined the school in this period. Two new governors have been appointed.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately one half of pupils had to be educated remotely for a short period. This included all pupils in Year 9.
- At the time of the inspection, roughly one in twenty pupils were being educated on the school site. The remainder were learning remotely. Approximately one quarter of pupils with SEND are being educated on site.
- At the time of the inspection, leaders were not having to manage significant staff absence.

Main findings

- You and your leadership team have ensured that pupils continue to receive an education during this period of national lockdown.
- Since joining the school, you have focused on improving many aspects of the school's work, including the quality of the curriculum. By the start of the pandemic, you had devised plans to increase the overall ambition and scope of the curriculum. Subject leaders had started to identify the most important knowledge for pupils to learn. They had also begun to consider the order in which this content should be taught. Some subject leaders are well on track with this process, whereas others remain in the early stages.
- You do not feel the pandemic has hampered your re-design of the curriculum. However, you do feel that the disruption has limited your efforts to improve

the way that teachers deliver the curriculum. You aim to make this a priority once the school reopens to all pupils.

- All pupils continue to study the full range of subjects. Subject leaders have modified their curriculums to account for the current disruption to education. Wherever possible, teachers are delivering the same content as they would ordinarily. However, this is not the case in some subjects, such as physical education and computing.
- Pupils who are being educated remotely are taught four 'live' lessons each day. In most subjects, teachers are trying to teach in a way that is similar to the way they would teach in the classroom. Teachers are experimenting with different ways of assessing pupils' learning when they work remotely.
- Pupils educated on the school site receive teaching in two different ways. Some pupils in key stage 3 are taught in the 'Bridge' and are taught by their normal teachers in the way that they would be ordinarily. Other pupils in key stage 3 and all pupils in key stage 4 access the same 'live' lessons as those learning from home.
- Over the last 20 months, leaders have made significant improvements to the way that they support vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. This support has continued during the pandemic. Staff keep in close contact with these pupils and their parents and carers. Where appropriate, leaders use different methods to ensure that pupils with the most complex needs continue their learning. For example, some pupils are provided with personalised work packs. Despite this, leaders have given less thought to how they support pupils with less complex needs, particularly in relation to remote learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the weakest readers continue to receive support. However, they have not identified whether these pupils need support to address any gaps in their knowledge of phonics. Teachers continue to teach the usual curriculum to pupils in Year 11. They are creating additional opportunities for these pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. This is to support the teacher-assessed grades they will have to submit to examination boards.
- Governors are adamant that the pandemic will not adversely affect leaders' plans to improve the school. They have increased their support for the school by meeting with leaders more regularly. This has helped them to understand the challenges faced by staff and pupils during the pandemic. They have continued to hold leaders to account for the development of the curriculum. This includes any changes made in response to the disruption to education.
- The school has received extensive support to improve the education it provides. Staff from the Loreto Teaching School Alliance have played a key role in supporting improvement in different areas. In particular, they have

helped to improve subject leaders' understanding of how to improve the curriculum. Staff have also benefited from help provided by the local authority and the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, representatives from the local authority and the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the leader of the Loreto Teaching School Alliance, governors, pupils, staff and parents to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also considered 11 responses from parents to Parent View; Ofsted's online questionnaire.

We also looked at a selection of evidence provided by leaders to show how they have developed the curriculum since the last monitoring inspection and how they are currently providing education. This included curriculum plans, examples of teaching materials and a sample of pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Will Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector