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Helen Pinnington  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Pinnington

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Saint Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School**

Following my remote inspection with Linda Emmett, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 February 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 September 2019.

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 make sure that subject leaders refocus the development of their curriculums, so that they:

- build towards appropriate end points
- outline what important knowledge needs to be taught and when
- are complemented by assessments that identify how well pupils are learning important knowledge.

## **Context**

- Since the last inspection, an assistant headteacher left the school. A deputy and lead practitioner from other schools in the Archdiocese of Liverpool are currently working at the school on a temporary basis. Leaders of English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and computing have joined the school. A small number of other changes have been made to the staff. Three governors have left the governing body and two have joined.
- In the autumn term 2020, all pupils in Years 7 to 10 were educated at home for a short period.
- At the time of the inspection, less than one tenth of pupils were being educated on the school site. This included a small number of vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders are dealing with an increase in staff absence due to COVID-19 this term. They are managing this by making regular, minor changes to the duties that staff undertake.

## **Main findings**

- Since the last inspection, you have continued to develop many aspects of the school's work. You have continued to focus on developing the school's curriculum. Despite this, some subject curriculums have not been developed in line with the guidance provided in the previous inspection report. For example, some curriculums focus too heavily on preparing pupils of all ages for their GCSE examinations. Others do not define the key knowledge that teachers intend pupils to learn. Teachers do not routinely use assessment in a way that helps them to identify how well pupils have learned the intended curriculum.
- Pupils who are being educated remotely continue to follow their usual timetable. This ensures they are receiving an appropriate education during these challenging times. Approximately four fifths of lessons are delivered 'live'. For the remaining lessons, pupils complete work they are set by their teachers. Leaders have slightly shortened the length of lessons. This is to reduce the amount of time that staff and pupils spend looking at screens. In

most subjects, the usual curriculum is followed, except in a few cases where pupils need access to specialist resources. As far as possible, teachers continue to teach pupils in a way that resembles classroom delivery.

- The small number of pupils who are educated on site access the same lessons as those learning remotely. Pupils in Year 11 continue to study the usual curriculum. You are aware that many pupils in Year 11 are particularly anxious. This is because of the uncertainty surrounding how they will be assessed now that examinations have been cancelled. As a result, you are prioritising support for the emotional well-being of these pupils.
- During the current school year, you have prioritised the development of reading. Leaders have introduced many strategies to develop pupils' enjoyment of reading and their ability to read for various purposes. Some of this work has been interrupted by the current disruption to education. Leaders have also trialled several approaches to support the weakest readers. They have started to monitor the impact of this work. Their information indicates that some of the strategies being used to support the weakest readers are not working well. Therefore, leaders are in the process of planning different approaches. Staff do not currently identify and support pupils who may have gaps in their knowledge of phonics. However, leaders are planning to address this issue.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have improved the identification of pupils with SEND. They have a growing understanding of these pupils' needs and how best to support them. Pupils with SEND have continued to receive support from external agencies, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, during the current national lockdown. Leaders have started to help teachers to provide better support for pupils with SEND when they learn remotely.
- Governors have increased the frequency with which they meet during the pandemic. This has enabled them to oversee leaders' work to support pupils at the same time as focusing on the school's long-term priorities. Governors feel that they have concentrated on fewer priorities, but with greater effect. However, they have not done enough to hold leaders to account for emerging weaknesses in the redesign of some subject curriculums.
- The school has received support through the archdiocese, local authority and a local teaching school. This support has helped to kick-start improvements in different areas, such as attendance and support for pupils with SEND. However, as yet, this support has not focused on developing subject curriculums.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, representatives from the local authority and archdiocese, pupils and staff to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also considered 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and further feedback from parents provided by the school.

We 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 Knowsley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Will Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**