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12 March 2021

Sarah Wilkinson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Wilkinson

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Chris Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 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 May 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 careful and ambitious choices about the knowledge taught to pupils as the new curriculum for key stage 3 is developed
- provide subject leaders with training on the principles of effective curriculum design
- ensure that those responsible for governance support and challenge the work of leaders effectively.

### **Context**

- You were appointed as headteacher in September 2020. The chief executive of the trust took up post in February 2020.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately 75% of pupils experienced periods of remote education due to COVID-19. This includes students in the sixth form.
- At the time of this inspection, around 90% of pupils were being educated at home. Just over 20% of pupils who are vulnerable and nearly 50% of pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site.
- A small number of staff were absent due to COVID-19 at the time of this inspection.

### **Main findings**

- Leaders have ensured that all pupils, whether attending school on site or learning at home remotely, have access to the school's curriculum. You have planned carefully for, and made clear decisions about, how to deliver education remotely. Teachers use a variety of software to support learning and give feedback to pupils. You have used surveys to listen to pupils' views and have made changes to how remote education is delivered.
- Leaders are beginning a review of the school's curriculum. You plan for more time to be allocated to key stage 3. This work is at an early stage. There is much to do to ensure that all staff understand the intent behind this change. Subject leaders require further training to decide the knowledge to be taught and the sequence of learning in all subjects across the school.
- Leaders are determined that no pupil should be disadvantaged by not having access to the appropriate technology. You have ensured that laptops have been provided to those pupils who need them. As a result, pupils' engagement with remote learning has increased in recent weeks.

- Teachers know which pupils are weaker readers. Reading support is taking place. The majority of pupils who need help to improve their reading are accessing this remotely.
- Less than a quarter of vulnerable pupils are attending on site. Because of this, you have prioritised contact with these pupils. There is a clear system in place to check on their welfare.
- You showed us examples of how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to learn. For example, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has arranged specific technology to help pupils with a hearing impairment. In addition, some teachers are pre-teaching difficult concepts to give pupils with SEND a head start in lessons.
- Students in the sixth form have high levels of engagement with remote education. Sixth form pupils told us that they feel well supported. You have made home visits to deliver materials to students for practical subjects such as art. This has helped students to continue their learning.
- The careers programme for Year 11 and the sixth form has continued. As a result of this, pupils in Year 11 and sixth form students were able to tell us about their plans for continuing their education.
- Members of the trust's board have started to check on the work of the school recently. Previously, such oversight was lacking.
- The trust is supporting leaders with training and the sharing of subject expertise. This work is necessary and urgent.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and curriculum leaders. We also spoke to pupils and a group of staff. We had discussions with the SENCo and with the designated safeguarding lead. We held a meeting with a member of the trust board to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at some example remote lessons and reviewed evidence of how you check pupils' engagement and feedback to them about their learning. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 48 free-text responses, and 81 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carl Sugden  
**Seconded Inspector**