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Anthony Costello
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Dear Mr Costello

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Savio Salesian College

Following my remote inspection with Michael Pennington, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 March 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.

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 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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:

- develop staff's expertise so that they can adapt subject curriculums to meet the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- train staff to identify the specific weaknesses in pupils' reading knowledge so that those pupils who are most behind with their reading can catch up.

Context

- Since the last inspection, you have been appointed as the permanent headteacher. Two new subject leaders have been appointed, one in science and one in religious education. Two new teachers, two teaching assistants and an academic mentor have also joined the school.
- One senior leader, three subject leaders and three teachers have left the school. A small number of support staff have also left the school. One governor has resigned.
- During the autumn term 2020, almost four fifths of pupils learned from home for a short period of time due to self-isolation. Pupils in Years 8, 9 and 11 had more periods of self-isolation than pupils in Years 7 and 10.
- At the time of this inspection, less than one tenth of pupils were being educated on site. Approximately half of pupils with an education, health and care plan, and just over two fifths of vulnerable pupils, were attending on site.

Main findings

- During the pandemic, you and other leaders have adapted the curriculum appropriately to ensure that pupils continue to learn. For example, in mathematics, leaders have changed the order in which they teach some topics, such as geometry. This is because leaders have found that these topics are more complex for pupils to learn remotely. As a result of leaders' changes to the curriculum, pupils can successfully access learning whether at home or at school. Consequently, leaders are ensuring that pupils receive an education in the current circumstances.
- Prior to the previous inspection, you and other leaders had begun to review the purpose of the school's curriculum. In the months that immediately followed the inspection, you successfully accelerated this work. Your checks on the curriculum highlighted considerable inconsistencies in the quality of subject planning. You appropriately identified a lack of depth, breadth and ambition in some subject curriculums.

- As a result of the considerable weaknesses in the curriculum, you enlisted the support of external specialist subject leaders in education (SLEs) to work with each subject leader. Collaboration with these SLEs has helped your leaders to think carefully about the important knowledge that pupils need to know. Leaders have also begun to reflect on the order in which pupils should learn new knowledge. SLEs provided much-needed training to begin to improve the subject expertise of staff.
- During the summer term 2020, subject leaders and teachers made steady progress with their curriculum planning. However, subject curriculums are at very different stages of development. In the last few months, you have sourced additional external support to evaluate your new curriculum plans. You and other leaders are under no illusion that there remains a significant amount of work to do to strengthen the quality of subject curriculums.
- In preparation for the next stage of their education, leaders are taking effective steps to ensure that pupils in Year 11 continue to build their subject knowledge. Year 11 pupils have access to weekly catch-up lessons. These sessions are helping to address missed learning as a result of the pandemic and the previous weak curriculum.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading among pupils and staff. Staff have implemented a basic system to identify any pupils who are behind with their reading. As a result, leaders know that the proportion of pupils in Year 7 who are behind in their reading is higher than is usually the case. Despite this, leaders do not identify the precise weaknesses in these pupils' phonic knowledge. This means that teachers are not well equipped to provide the right support to help these pupils to catch up quickly with their reading.
- You have taken some effective steps to strengthen teachers' knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This is starting to have a positive effect on how well this group of pupils is learning. There are visible improvements to the curriculum offer for those pupils who are currently working at home or in school. That said, all too often, this support remains too general and does not do enough to address the specific needs of individual pupils.
- Staff appropriately prioritise the health and well-being of vulnerable pupils. For example, pupils regularly access specialist counselling services. This fosters pupils' mental health and well-being so that they can effectively engage with their education. The pupils with whom we spoke were appreciative of the help provided.
- Governors have an increasingly accurate understanding of the challenges that the school continues to face. They demand more assurance about the actions that leaders are taking in order to secure improvements to the curriculum. As

a result, they are more knowledgeable about the education that pupils are currently receiving.

- The local authority continues to hold regular meetings with you and the chair of the governing body. The local authority is well informed about the difficulties that you face at the school, including around finance and staffing. The support that you have received has strengthened the leadership of the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke with you, other senior leaders and a representative from the local authority. We also spoke with subject leaders, other members of staff and groups of pupils. We met with representatives from the governing body and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. This was to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed curriculum documentation, examples of remote education and minutes of the governing body meetings. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 16 free-text responses. We also reviewed the 32 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

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 Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alyson Middlemass
Her Majesty's Inspector