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29 April 2021

Alex Hren  
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Dear Mr Hren

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Saint Paul's Catholic High School**

Following my remote inspection with Simon Hunter, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 30 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 improvement.

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 has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in December 2018.

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:

- prepare for the expected changes in the range of needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) by ensuring that all staff are trained effectively so they can confidently provide education and support to meet those needs.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, a deputy headteacher left the school and was replaced by two assistant headteachers.
- Six other teachers, including one middle leader, have left the school. Five of these posts have already been filled. In addition, you have appointed 10 new members of staff to provide additional support to pupils, including two teachers and two teaching assistants to work with pupils with SEND.
- A new governor has joined the local governing body.
- The school's roll has increased by over one fifth due to the closure of another local school. As part of this, Saint Paul's has taken on an additional provision including its staffing, funded by the local authority, to support a group of pupils with SEND.
- In the early part of the spring term, while the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, just over one tenth of all pupils attended on site. Of these, well over half of all vulnerable pupils and pupils with an education, health and care plan attended on site.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly all pupils were attending school on site. One group of pupils in Year 9 was self-isolating.

## **Main findings**

- You successfully managed the significant increase in the school's roll from September 2020, so that all pupils settled well. You, other leaders and staff made sure that pupils continued to learn during the pandemic. You, and other senior leaders, maintain a strong partnership with governors and the trust.
- You and other leaders have strengthened pupils' knowledge of a broad, basic curriculum. You extended the teaching of key stage 3 of the national curriculum to pupils in Year 9 at the start of this school year. This change also meant that you had the same starting point for pupils in Year 10, whether or not they joined the school this school year. This has helped new pupils to settle into their learning.

- Teachers systematically check what pupils have learned. Teachers then adjust their plans to allow them to address any weaker parts of pupils' subject knowledge. Middle leaders and teachers have written summaries of the knowledge pupils need to remember. You told us that, while these summaries are available for pupils in all year groups, some more development is needed on those for pupils in Years 10 and 11 before these are fully published. Middle leaders and teachers of pupils in Year 11 have adjusted their plans for pupils' learning. This is so that teachers can make sure that pupils' knowledge is secure before they complete pupils' GCSE assessments.
- During the third national lockdown, middle leaders and teachers of some subjects made changes to the order of topics in the curriculum. They did this to allow pupils to learn most effectively while they had to stay at home. For example, in mathematics, work for pupils in Year 7 on measuring angles was delayed until they returned to school. Middle leaders and teachers continue to provide education for pupils who are unable to attend school. You expect pupils to access online resources for the lessons in their usual timetable. You require them to send the work that they have completed at home to their teachers for review and marking.
- You and other leaders support pupils' reading well. You provided training for staff about how they can support pupils' reading. Pupils borrow books from the recently refurbished library and have online access to a wide range of books. Such activities promote the love of reading and support pupils' fluency. Teachers regularly check on pupils' reading. You have identified that the proportion of pupils in Year 7 who find reading hard increased this school year. Specialist staff have received additional training so that they can give carefully targeted support to the weakest readers.
- You and other leaders have increased the support available to vulnerable pupils. During the recent period when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, staff kept in close contact with vulnerable pupils, particularly those not attending school on site, to check on their well-being and learning. You provided resources and information for pupils and their parents or carers about ways of supporting pupils' mental health.
- The number of pupils with SEND has increased. You expect further increases at the start of the next school year. You and other leaders have reorganised the school's support for such pupils. For example, you have arranged for specially trained staff to work with pupils with particular needs, including autism spectrum disorder and social and emotional needs. However, you are at the early stages of checking exactly what will be needed next school year and providing the necessary training for all staff.
- Governors have increased their scrutiny and support of you and other leaders. During the pandemic, the local governing body held more frequent meetings.

Its members check that pupils are learning well, and that staff well-being is considered. The trust continues to shape the overall development of the school.

- You and other leaders receive support from an experienced educational professional. You have organised this in partnership with the trust and the local authority. This support includes quality assurance work and training. These activities have made a strong contribution to the school's improvement. Increasingly, you and other leaders are using the advice and training that you have received to train other staff.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and other senior leaders; the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust (WCAT); groups of pupils, teachers and middle leaders; representatives of the local governing body, the Diocese of Shrewsbury and the local authority; and an educational professional who works with you and other leaders to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also examined information about the school's curriculum and other details published on the school's website. We looked at 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 11 free-text responses, and 81 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of WCAT, the director of education for the Diocese of Shrewsbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Manchester City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Selby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**