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Erin Wheeler
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wheeler

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Christ The King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received four successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also met with other leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. I also reviewed leaders' self-evaluation documents and improvement plans. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Christ The King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teachers use assessment systems consistently well to identify and address pupils' missing knowledge before introducing new learning
- ensure that teachers are fully equipped to successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well

- strengthen the support for pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read, or who are behind with their reading, so that they can catch up quickly with their peers.

Main findings

Since the previous graded inspection, you have taken effective action to strengthen leadership across the school. For example, you have appointed a new deputy headteacher. Furthermore, you and governors have restructured the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. This has enabled you to streamline and strengthen systems around quality assurance and accountability.

You, other senior leaders and members of the governing body have responded positively and swiftly to address the areas of improvement identified in the previous inspection report. You have acted quickly to develop leadership at all levels, including the leadership of subject curriculums. You have introduced clear procedures for monitoring and checking the quality of the curriculum. This is having a positive impact. For instance, subject leaders are now better equipped to ensure that subject curriculums are being delivered as intended.

The previous inspection report highlighted that some teachers were not delivering the curriculum consistently well. To address this, you have ensured that subject leaders are equipped to support teachers to select the most effective teaching methods to deliver learning. As a result, many teachers are increasingly choosing activities and making use of effective pedagogy to help pupils to remember and recall previous learning.

You, and other leaders, have supported staff to develop their understanding of how to use assessment strategies to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Subject leaders, together with staff, are in the process of ensuring that assessment strategies are closely matched to the knowledge that pupils should know and remember. However, this is not yet embedded across all subjects and all key stages. Added to this, some subject leaders and teachers remain unclear about how to check that pupils are secure in their learning over time. You acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that assessment supports teachers to pinpoint where pupils' knowledge is less secure.

You, together with governors and leaders, have high aspirations and expectations for pupils with SEND and for disadvantaged pupils. You have ensured that all pupils access the same ambitious curriculum. For example, you have taken steps to ensure that pupils, regardless of background or ability, access equitable learning across the curriculum. You recognised that the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND was not as effective as it could be. To remedy this, you have sought external support to upskill teachers in adapting the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This work is beginning to have an impact, although it is in the early stages of implementation.

Since the previous inspection, you have acted decisively to prioritise reading. You understand that, on entry to the school, a greater proportion of pupils are behind with their reading than in the past. To address this, you have strengthened the leadership of

reading across the school. You have developed staff's expertise in using appropriate reading strategies across the curriculum. You, and other leaders, have put systems in place to identify and support pupils who are behind with their reading knowledge. However, these systems do not enable leaders to identify the precise deficits in pupils' reading or phonic knowledge. Consequently, the support that is put in place for some pupils in the first instance does not match their precise need. This means that these pupils do not catch up as quickly as they should with their reading knowledge.

You, together with governors, have been relentless in maintaining a sharp focus on school improvement. Governors are incisive in their understanding of the strengths, barriers and priorities for the school. They robustly hold you and other leaders to account for the quality of the curriculum. Staff are appreciative of your efforts to support their workload and well-being.

The previous inspection report highlighted that some sixth-form students were not attending school regularly enough. You have worked successfully to raise staff's expectations of attendance and punctuality in the sixth form. As a result, rates of overall and persistent absence in the sixth form have decreased since the last inspection. This has been particularly important as the number of students in the sixth form has increased. Together with leaders, you have strengthened the personal development programme offered to students in the sixth form. As a result, students are now receiving important life lessons and have access to a range of enrichment activities. This is helping to prepare students more readily for life in modern Britain. It is also ensuring that students are informed well about their next steps into education or employment.

You have valued the support that you have received from the archdiocese, the local authority and external advisers. As well as this, you have accepted support from a national leader of education and specialist leaders of education to support your school improvement journey. Your outward-looking approach to seeking support and challenge has enabled you to explore ways in which you can improve the quality of education for pupils. You welcome the support and challenge that external partners provide.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Kate Bowker
His Majesty's Inspector