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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Elizabeth Furber
Principal
All Saints Academy Dunstable
Houghton Road
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU5 5AB

Dear Mrs Furber

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of All Saints Academy Dunstable

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 23 November 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 was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November 2022 and January 2023.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders and governors the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I visited a range of lessons and spoke to other leaders. I spoke to and met with groups of pupils and observed their behaviour around the school. I reviewed the 47 responses to the staff survey, 201 responses to the pupil survey and 51 responses and 34 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as having serious weaknesses.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Leaders, including governors, have worked rapidly and tenaciously to make significant improvements to safeguarding systems and procedures. Governors check that pupils are kept safe. Records of safeguarding concerns and subsequent actions are now appropriately detailed and accessible to the right people. Senior leaders now monitor reports of concerns daily. Consequently, leaders' responses to safeguarding concerns are coordinated and appropriate. This increasingly provides pupils with the prompt and targeted support that they need. Pastoral and senior leaders have received additional training to enable them to help and manage concerns, and all staff have received up-to-date training. As a result, staff have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to keep children safe.

The school has evaluated the extent to which pupils feel safe and have made improvements based on their feedback. Pupils overwhelmingly report that they now feel safe in school. Improving behaviour has reduced pupils' concerns about their safety around the school. Pupils increasingly trust adults will help them should they need it. They also know how to report concerns anonymously.

The school has established clear and consistent procedures to check that pupils who attend alternative provision attend regularly and are safe. Leaders routinely check the attendance, safety and progress of pupils' attendance and what they are learning. The school now has thorough records of these checks, which help to build a picture of the quality and appropriateness of each placement. The curriculum meets pupils' personal development needs well.

The school has prioritised improving how well pupils' knowledge is checked in lessons and how these checks are used to adjust the delivery of the curriculum. 'Do now' checks are built into the start of lessons, often using the tablets that pupils are provided with. These help pupils to settle quickly and focus on their learning. Some staff are more effective than others at how well they check pupils' learning and use that information. Many adapt work to match pupils' needs, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, staff do not consistently use the information that they collect from these checks to inform how they plan and deliver the curriculum.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved. The school has raised expectations and pupils know what is expected of them. Leaders analyse behavioural data closely. They use this to improve the conduct of key groups and individuals in and out of lessons. In most lessons, pupils can now work with little disruption to their learning. Pupils do, however, report some inconsistencies in how staff apply behaviour policies, and this can sometimes result in behaviour that is less positive. Pupils say that there is little bullying. They say that the school is a welcoming environment for all pupils.

Although attendance is slowly improving, some groups, including disadvantaged pupils, do not attend well enough. Persistent absence remains too high. Leaders are aware of these issues. They are working hard to improve pupils' understanding of the value of attending school every day. The school closely analyses how well pupils attend school and uses a combination of rewards and sanctions to improve attendance.

The school has brought in many changes in a short period of time. These are addressing the issues facing the school, especially around behaviour and attitudes and safeguarding. Leaders, and governors, have become increasingly robust when checking the efficacy of their work. They are increasingly precise in how they measure the impact of changes. Staff are clearer about leaders' priorities and how they can contribute to their implementation. They recognise that the school is improving. Some staff are concerned about the impact of changes on their workload. Leaders should work closely with staff to provide them with the support that they need.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of St. Albans, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Central Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Woodley
His Majesty's Inspector