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Mrs Sara Crawshaw
Headteacher
English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College
Catcote Road
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Dear Mrs Sara Crawshaw

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 8 February 2024, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

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, the chief executive officer (CEO), the chair of the directors of the trust, the local governing body and other senior leaders 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 the deputy headteacher to review the quality of education, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at pupil work. I reviewed the single central record, discussed the culture of safeguarding across the school and analysed the school's behaviour and attendance information. I have considered all of this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

The school has prioritised improving the quality of education. This includes implementing new approaches to delivering the curriculum. Teachers have received training to ensure that these changes have been introduced effectively. They value the opportunity to work together to improve the school. Training has been effective in creating consistency across the teaching staff. The school's 'EMCS' model of teaching is used by teachers to plan and deliver lessons. As such, the implementation of the curriculum is now more consistent. Pupils are knowing and remembering more of what they have been taught.

You recognise that some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have not achieved well in end of key stage assessments. The school has responded well to the reasons for this. Older pupils receive 'mastery' sessions, tutoring and additional form time activities to address any gaps in knowledge pupils have. You have identified pupils in key stage 3 who need support to become confident and fluent readers. The school ensures that these pupils receive the support they need to access the curriculum.

The school has secured improvements in pupils' behaviour. Leaders have raised everyone's expectations of pupils' conduct. A new behaviour policy has had a positive impact. Pupils say that poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and consistently by staff. Most pupils focus well in lessons. Your own analysis shows that a minority of pupils continue to try and disrupt the learning of others.. As such, the number of suspensions has increased this academic year. Leaders, including governors and trust leaders, have a strong oversight of the emerging patterns and trends. This is used to inform leaders' actions.

The low attendance of some pupils is a barrier to their learning. This includes some disadvantaged pupils and older pupils, who do not attend school often enough. Leaders meet regularly to analyse attendance data and coordinate the school's support for pupils. You, quite rightly, have identified improving pupils' attendance as a key improvement area for the school. The school knows that there is more to do to improve attendance and has an improvement plan in place and is deploying resources to address this.

The school has implemented a clear improvement plan to address the next steps identified at the previous inspection. This plan is monitored and evaluated by you, other leaders in school, governors and trustees. You have sought external support relating to attendance and behaviour to ensure that new systems are effective. Leaders have ensured that the school is improving quickly. Pupils and staff are proud of the school. They value the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust, the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Hartlepool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Voyce
His Majesty's Inspector