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11 September 2024

Mary Henshaw  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Henshaw

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 16 and 17 July 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 was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in June 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, Jamie Jardine and Scott Maclean, Ofsted Inspectors, and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, other staff, the interim executive board (IEB), the local authority and the diocese, 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. We also visited lessons, met with other staff and pupils, and sampled pupils' work and the school's documentation. We focused on checking leaders' work to improve the quality of education, governance, behaviour and provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We also considered aspects of the school's ongoing work to enhance the culture of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. 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 be no longer judged as requiring special measures.**

**The school may appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.**

The school can appoint one early careers teacher in each of the following subjects: English, mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education (PE).

**The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

The headteacher, who was in post at the time of the previous inspection in June 2023, continues to lead the school. An IEB was established in January 2024. 19 teaching staff, and five non-teaching staff have left their posts for a variety of reasons since the previous inspection. The school has successfully secured permanent staff to vacant roles. There are new subject leaders in post in modern foreign languages, English, drama and PE. There is a new literacy leader in post. There have been non-teaching appointments to the roles of chaplain, school business manager and behaviour manager.

A restructure of the leadership team has helped the school to begin to improve its processes and systems to support pupils with SEND and to manage pupils' behaviour. For instance, there has been a recent appointment of an experienced SEND coordinator. In September 2024, the school will have additional capacity within the senior leadership team through the secondment of a deputy headteacher from a local school.

Since the previous inspection, the school and the IEB, have taken effective actions, in a logical order, to address the weaknesses identified. The school is relentless in its focus on making sustained changes so that staff have consistently high expectations of what pupils should learn and of their conduct. It is evident that this drive for improvement is at the centre of each decision that the school are making. However, it is acknowledged that there is more to do to make sure that the improvement work is consistently implemented in all areas of the school.

In this monitoring visit, the focus was on the school's actions to improve its ambition of the curriculum, the support for teachers to deliver the curriculum as intended, the use of assessment strategies, the provision for pupils with SEND, support for pupils at the early stages of reading and pupils' behaviour. These were the recommendations from the last inspection. I also checked safeguarding processes and procedures.

The school's improvement plan focuses on the right things. The school has identified what needs to be done and when, prioritising those actions that will have the greatest and most sustained impact over time. In line with those plans, the school has begun much-needed work on developing the curriculum. The school has focused on improving the quality of the curriculum. It has strengthened staffing across school, and there is an increased clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability. The school has taken sufficient steps to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. However, in some subjects, the school is at the early stages of refining the curriculum. Although the school

has set out the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that it expects pupils to learn, this is not yet implemented as intended in all subject areas.

Staff are now better equipped to check how well pupils know and understand the curriculum. For instance, the improvements that have been made to assessment strategies mean that staff have a sharper focus on questioning. This means that they are now able to check pupils' progress more effectively. There is also greater consistency in how staff share feedback with pupils. In departments where processes are more embedded, pupils find the points for reflection from their teachers helpful. They act on the advice that teachers give. However, the school recognises that this practice is not as strong in other subjects. In these subjects, some staff do not effectively identify what pupils do and do not remember.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school's work to support those pupils who find reading difficult was in its infancy. This work has gathered pace. The school has improved the accuracy with which it checks pupils' reading ability. The school has pinpointed that, for some pupils, this is owing to gaps in their phonics knowledge. In response, the introduction of a systematic phonics programme is starting to help these pupils to develop as fluent and accurate readers. Staff are better trained to deliver the phonics programme. Most pupils respond well to the phonics sessions as reading books are more suited to their reading needs. However, some of this work is at the very early stages of development which means that not all older pupils have benefitted from this work.

Since taking up post, leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND have worked determinedly to address deficiencies in this provision. The way that the school now identifies, monitors and supports pupils with SEND is better than it has been previously. The school has high ambitions for the most vulnerable pupils at the school. The SEND team have reviewed the information that teachers receive in relation to pupils' needs. They have made sure that suggested strategies on pupils' individual support plans are appropriate. Therefore, staff are guided well so that they can adapt their lessons so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. This includes effectively considering how teaching assistants are deployed in lessons. Nonetheless, the school is aware that support in the classroom for pupils with SEND is not provided consistently well. As such, this remains an area of priority for the school.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved since the previous inspection. The school has raised its expectations, so that most pupils know what is expected of them. Leaders analyse behavioural data closely. They use this to improve the conduct of key groups and individual pupils 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 said that bullying is rare and is dealt with well. The school has launched a 'behaviour reset' drive and this has contributed to a rise in suspensions and permanent exclusions. The school recognises that there is more work to do to ensure that the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions decreases over time.

Although pupils' attendance is slowly improving, some groups, including disadvantaged pupils, do not attend frequently enough. Persistent absence remains too high. The school is increasingly aware of the key barriers to attendance. It is working hard to improve pupils' understanding of the value of attending school every day.

The school is fully aware of the importance of engaging with the community and knows there is more to do in this area. The newly formed parent forum is an example of a change that has recently improved the school's engagement with parents and the community. However, a small number of parents are not convinced that the school is progressing sufficiently well. The school knows that it has more work to do to regain the trust of the parent community.

The school draws on expertise from the local authority, the diocese and from local schools to provide support, challenge and professional development. The school has carefully considered who it works with externally. This has ensured that the support is appropriate and relevant for the pupils and community that the school serves. These working partnerships with other schools, other trusts and specialists are in place and continue to develop. Staff are positive about working in the school. They feel supported by senior leaders and the IEB to make the necessary changes to improve the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Sharples  
**His Majesty's Inspector**