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Mr Aiden Bannon
Heateacher
Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College
Oakley Road
Small Heath
Birmingham
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Dear Mr Jones

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College

Following my visit with James McNeillie, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 16 July 2014, and the visit of Sandra Hayes, Her Majesty's Inspector and Denah Jones, Her Majesty's on 26 September, 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and leadership and management at the school.

Evidence

Over the three inspection days inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with every member of the senior leadership team, the attendance officer, bursar and the Chair of the Governing Body. An inspector also spoke to a group of Year 10 students. On 26 September a staff questionnaire was undertaken and 79 responses were scrutinised and taken into account.

Inspectors scrutinised governors' minutes of their meetings, attendance records, and budget information about the use of funding for those pupils eligible for the pupil

premium funding (additional funding to support the learning of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority).

This inspection has raised serious concerns about the way in which leaders are managing significant changes to staffing. I am therefore recommending to the Regional Director for the West Midlands that the next full section 5 inspection be brought forward.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

In this smaller than average-sized secondary school there is an above average proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding. A high proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups. At the time of the inspection the school was going through a staffing restructure.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' attitudes and conduct were not a focus of this inspection. Inspectors scrutinised logs relating to student's behaviour which did not raise any concerns. However, senior leaders' analysis of these logs is weak and prevents them from having a forensic view of behaviour. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

A significant group of staff believe leaders have poorly managed the staffing restructure. Of this group, most accept the reasons leaders have given for the restructure and are seeking to make the changes work. A few are not convinced that the new structure will benefit the school. This group believes that senior leaders are making decisions which will have a detrimental impact on the budget. While senior leaders have followed specialist guidance from the local authority, it is clear that they have failed to win the 'hearts and minds' of some staff. The different views of staff were reflected in the completed questionnaires. While the large majority of staff feel the school is well led and managed, a few described what they perceived to be bullying and intimidation by senior leaders including in relation to the observation of the quality of teaching.

The staffing restructure has meant there is some budget instability because there are still unknowns in terms of the costs of reducing staffing. The school's decisions on how to spend the pupil premium funding are questionable. From the evidence provided to inspectors, it is not clear how this money is being targeted to meet the needs of the students for whom it is intended.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The school's record of checks on recruitment contained some administrative errors. However, an examination of a sample of staff files confirmed that all required checks had been made. The school's child protection and attendance policies contain relevant aspects of the school's approach to keeping students safe. However, the child protection policy currently provides conflicting information with regards to what members of staff should do if there is an allegation against the headteacher. This policy is currently being reviewed to include more reference to how the school's work will address issues such as female genital mutilation and protecting students from the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Governors are aware of the unrest amongst staff. They have commissioned the local authority's services to investigate anonymous allegations made to the local authority, in line with the local authority whistleblowing policy.

External support

The local authority has provided the school with very little support because they judged it as a 'good' school. More recently the local authority has provided specialist support for the school as it goes through a staff restructuring. The evidence of this inspection demonstrates that this advice has not been effective in ensuring leaders manage the process well.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham City Council, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc Chair of the Governing Body