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4 November 2016

Mrs Linda Emmett  
Headteacher  
All Saints Catholic College  
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Cheshire  
SK16 5AP

Dear Mrs Emmett

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints Catholic College**

Following my visit with Timothy Gartside, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 October 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2016.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

### **Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement/action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs). I recommend strongly that any such NQTs are provided with opportunities to observe good and better teaching

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the executive headteacher of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Shrewsbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Tameside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gena Merrett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**Annex: The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2016.**

- Ensure that leaders, and the newly reconstituted governing body, build urgently on initial systems put in place to improve the school, so that the quality of teaching and behaviour of pupils is at least good across all year groups, by making sure that:
  - leaders at all levels swiftly bring about the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress and behaviour in classrooms and around the school
  - the use and impact of the pupil premium and extra literacy support for weaker readers in Year 7 is sharply monitored, in order to ensure that it improves the progress of those pupils whom it is intended to support
  - subject leaders are effectively trained and supported in quickly overcoming the legacy of weak teaching and poor behaviour in lessons and around the school
  - leaders in charge of improving attendance intensify their work with families to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent, especially in Years 10 and 11
  - parents and pupils feel well informed about changes in a timely fashion and have the opportunity to express their views.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics and the sciences by:
  - raising the expectations that teachers have of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most-able pupils, so that they provide challenging and engaging activities in lessons and in homework
  - ensuring that teachers make accurate assessments of pupils’ progress, set accurate targets and use the information in their planning to speed up pupils’ progress
  - making certain that teachers mark pupils’ work according to the school’s marking policy, so that pupils receive the guidance they need to improve the standard of their work
  - insisting that pupils’ skills in writing at length are of the highest quality across all subjects.
- Ensure that opportunities to develop pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are not missed, by careful planning across all subjects.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 4–5 October 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met the executive headteacher, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. The lead inspector met a group of trust directors and academy governors that included three members of the department of education for the diocese of Shrewsbury. Inspectors observed teaching and learning and, together with senior leaders, scrutinised pupils' work. They spent time observing how pupils behaved around the school.

### **Context**

Since the inspection, the trust and the new governing body have worked urgently with the executive headteacher and the headteacher to secure improvement to the school's leadership. In June, a new deputy headteacher was appointed to lead the area of community, pastoral care and guidance. By September 2016, three new members of the senior leadership had been appointed to replace those who left in July. An associate deputy headteacher has been seconded for three days a week from The Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College to support the development of the curriculum and the improvement of outcomes. There are also new heads of department for English, mathematics and religious education. Further changes in staffing have seen 20 teachers leave the school, including four in mathematics, four in science and six in the English department.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Since September 2015, the trust and a new, strengthened governing body have driven and supported the improvement of the school's leadership. As a result of highly focused actions, the school's significant financial deficit has been cleared, leaving it in a stronger place than previously from which to develop further.

The new headteacher, supported by the executive headteacher, has been unrelenting in her drive to improve teaching, learning and the behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around the school. She has a very strong vision for the school, clearly outlined in the action plan, which encompasses strategic planning, developing a new culture and ethos for the school and driving improvements 'on the ground'.

Senior leaders have been steadfast in their ambition to secure senior and middle leadership that meets their exacting standards. This has meant that some difficult decisions have been made with regard to staffing. As a consequence of these actions, the school's leadership has been strengthened at all levels.

Leaders have established a vision for achievement and high expectation that has been shared with pupils, staff and parents and that is emphasised at the start of each lesson. They have put into place robust systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching. Consequently, that which has been inadequate has been eradicated or is improving rapidly. Furthermore, the appointment of new staff in English, mathematics and science is improving teaching and learning quality in these subjects.

In June, a new deputy headteacher took up his post to secure improvements in the pastoral care systems, with the aim of reforming pupils' behaviour and attendance and providing better mentoring and guidance for pupils' academic progress. He has worked with the headteacher to improve the way parents work with the school staff and to recover the confidence of the local community.

There is already clear impact of this work in improved attendance, a reduction in exclusions and in improvement of pupils' appearance and behaviour that staff, governors and pupils frequently commented on during this monitoring visit. Recent feedback from parents to the school and on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, shows far more positive comments about the leadership of the school and behaviour than previously.

There is now a clear and focused action plan for the targeted spending of pupil premium funding, to secure improved behaviour, attendance and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Previously, this funding was poorly targeted and had little impact.

Leaders are using catch-up funding appropriately to improve reading and numeracy for those Year 7 and 8 pupils who enter the school with below-average attainment in English and mathematics. A new member of staff has been appointed to lead a strategy to improve reading and writing across the school. It is too soon, however, to see any impact from these strategies.

Leaders are now confident in the accuracy of assessments made by teachers. While outcomes for pupils were low in 2016, owing to the legacy of underachievement, the more accurate systems in place to predict pupils' attainment meant that they came as no surprise.

Middle leadership is developing. These leaders are supported by regular line management meetings, and paired lesson observations and work scrutiny to evaluate teaching and learning with increasing success. Consequently, each middle leader has produced an action plan against which to measure progress.

The school has moved on considerably since the previous inspection in February but leaders are acutely aware that they still face many challenges. There are areas where, as yet, there is little impact, particularly on the attainment and progress of pupils. Furthermore, there is little reduction in the absence and exclusion of

disadvantaged pupils. New policies on teaching and marking are beginning to make a difference to pupils' learning, but they are not yet consistently applied across the school. Therefore, their impact is variable. Academy leaders recognise that some leaders are new in post and will need support to hold staff to account, so that standards of pupils' achievement can improve.

The trust directors and the governors continue to meet monthly to monitor the progress of the school against its action plan to secure improvement. The diocesan department for education is represented on both bodies. They provide clear strategic direction for the college and the appropriate balance of challenge and support to leaders in school. The high level of commitment and moral purpose of governors and trust directors is very evident when speaking to them. They are ambitious and determined that the school will move rapidly to good, so as not to fail any more pupils. They have, between them, a significant level of skills and expertise. They are sharply focused on developing and sustaining leadership skills throughout the school. The minutes of the monthly meetings show how they ask searching questions to ensure that leaders' actions are having an impact.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Inspectors agree with the assertion by school leaders that the establishment of robust systems and procedures to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching is paying dividends. Judgements on teaching and learning are now triangulated by senior and middle leaders through lesson observation, work scrutiny, and the progress made by pupils.

The assistant headteacher, leading the above area, is meticulous and focused on the improvement of teaching and marking. He is developing a coaching and mentoring programme to secure further improvement. This is evident, for example, in the way teachers on the Teach First programme are well supported and developed.

Inspectors agree with school leaders that English is the strongest core subject. Teaching, marking and learning are improving in all of the core subjects. They are more consistently strong in English. There is some strong teaching and marking in mathematics and science, but the quality overall is more varied.

Learning is best where subject knowledge is strong, relationships are positive, learning objectives are clear, questioning is used to challenge and extend learning, and the lesson tasks and pace challenge all pupils. In most lessons, pupils behave well, are keen to make good progress and have good attitudes to learning. In some lessons, however, where there is a broad range of abilities, teachers do not plan to meet the needs of all pupils and the pace of lessons is too slow to enable the most able to achieve the progress of which they are capable. Pockets of poor behaviour remain where classroom provision is weak. This impedes progress.

In the teaching sets for the most able pupils, attitudes to learning are good, provision is challenging, and work in pupils' books shows good progress. However, pupils could make even faster progress if teachers set them higher targets for achievement in these lessons. In core subjects, teachers are using baseline assessments and diagnostic tests to identify areas of weakness and target effective interventions, to ensure that pupils who are falling behind can catch up rapidly.

Inspectors' scrutiny of work across the curriculum clearly shows that, where the new marking policy is used well, it has a significant impact on pupils' learning and progress. This is because pupils are given time to recognise and correct errors or to improve their work. There are some examples of effective marking that sets targets for improvement and where teachers tracked back to ensure that pupils had followed up the advice. However, this policy is not yet being consistently applied and, in some subjects, this is having a negative impact on pupils' progress.

Scrutiny of work also highlighted that, in some subjects, there are good examples of extended writing and strong marking to improve literacy, including comments about standards of presentation. However, in many subjects there are as yet no examples of extended writing and teachers do not identify poor presentation and spelling. As a consequence, presentation of work is mixed and there is already a deterioration in some pupils' books at this early stage of the term. Where presentation of work is challenged by the teacher, there is usually an improvement. However, in some books poor presentation, including the failure to use basic equipment such as a ruler to underline or draw charts, goes unchallenged.

Leaders have appointed a teacher to support the development of writing skills across the curriculum. It is, however, too early for this strategy to have had any impact. Similarly, strategies to improve wider reading are still being established and, as yet, there is insufficient impact data to determine its success. A reading programme has been established. A highly valued librarian tracks the pattern of borrowing. The impact of these strategies will be evaluated on future visits.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

There are significant improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning because there are now generally effective systems in place to manage pupils' behaviour.

Pupils wear their uniform smartly. They are polite and friendly.

Behaviour around the school, in breaks and at lunchtime is generally good. Inspectors observed small pockets of poor behaviour and movement in some areas of the school. Teachers, pupils and governors told inspectors that there have been significant improvements in behaviour. Exclusions are still high but have reduced considerably since this time last year and there has been a reduction in referrals to the internal exclusion base. Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons are generally good.

Senior leaders have developed pupils' leadership roles, such as head boy and head girl, a school council and form monitors. These responsibilities are helping pupils to contribute to the work of the school. They are also working with pupils on a programme of charity work.

Far more effective support is now in place to improve attendance. This includes the appointment of an attendance officer and strong pastoral leaders to follow up on pupils who are not in school. Levels of attendance overall have improved and the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now similar to other pupils. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still well below that of other pupils in the school.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils remains limited. The personal, social, health and economic education programme is not effectively delivered in a very limited time space in form or tutor periods. Staff say they find this difficult to do well alongside administrative duties. Pupils learn about diversity and different faiths in religious education lessons. However, the pupils who spoke to inspectors were vague in their understanding of British justice, democracy and key British institutions and services.

Senior leaders agree that careers information, education and guidance are weak and they are planning better provision.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4 in 2016 showed a continuing decline in standards. The proportion of pupils attaining five GCSEs at grade A\* to C, including English and mathematics, declined further from 2015, resulting in a three-year decline in this measure. A significant proportion of pupils attained a good grade in English or mathematics but not in both subjects because tracking had not been sufficiently rigorous to identify and act on this mismatch.

The provisional Progress 8 score, which now identifies the progress of all pupils in their best eight subjects, was below that expected at -0.53. Low outcomes in English, mathematics and science had contributed significantly to this poor result.

There were significantly wide differences between the achievement and progress of girls and boys. Disadvantaged pupils made only half the progress of other pupils. Differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers were equally wide. The only group of pupils to make good progress were pupils of lower ability but middle- and higher-ability pupils underachieved significantly.

The headteacher identifies the legacy of poor teaching in some subjects as the root cause of these poor outcomes. However, during the previous academic year, the new school leaders secured accuracy of assessment across subjects so that predictions were mostly accurate. Outcomes were stronger in some subjects,

notably in religious education, art, music, modern languages and some technology subjects.

The current Year 11 are also working well below expectations in core subjects, as a result of a legacy of poor teaching for the last four years. This assessment is matched by work seen in Year 11 books. Middle- and higher-ability pupils' work is well below the expected level and is often poorly presented. Pupils with lower than average starting points appear to be working at or above the standard expected for their level of ability.

Progress currently seen in mathematics, science and English presents a more positive picture for other year groups, suggesting that standards are rising. Stronger teaching in Year 10 is leading to good progress in learning. The standard of work in books is at an expected level for the ability of pupils at this stage of the school year. Progress can clearly be seen in those books where teachers are closely following the school's marking policy because pupils are constantly responding to advice and correcting their own errors.

In some lessons for the more able pupils, expectations of what pupils can achieve could still be higher to ensure that progress is increased. In lessons where the spread of ability is wide, the work needs to have more pace and challenge if the most able pupils are to make the progress of which they are capable.

Year 11 pupils attending Tameside College for vocational courses attend, although they are not always punctual. They make good progress and are expected to achieve the qualifications for which they are studying. The deputy headteacher maintains regular contact with the college about these pupils' safety, attendance and progress.

### **External support**

The trust has secured the support of The Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College, an outstanding teaching school in Altrincham. This school provides the executive headteacher's oversight, an associate deputy headteacher's time for three days a week, and a number of specialist leaders of education, particularly to support the development of mathematics. Middle leaders have previously had middle leadership training from the partner school, while other teachers have attended, and valued, targeted training sessions.

The support for leadership has had a very strong impact on improvement. This includes the strong support of the executive headteacher for the strategic direction and financial management of the college. The seconded deputy headteacher has assisted in establishing an improved curriculum and more robust assessment procedures. Two of The Blessed Thomas Holford governors have joined the school governing body, where their expertise in finance and in teaching oversight has been invaluable in challenging and supporting leaders. Support provided for the new head

of mathematics is proving vital in shaping the mathematics curriculum, improving teaching methods, diagnostic assessment and targeted intervention for pupils who are falling behind.

The headteacher receives support from a member of the Talented Leader programme. Senior leaders have also used an external consultant to quality assure the moderation of teaching and learning.