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1 August 2019

Mrs J Bowen  
St Patrick's Catholic College, A Voluntary Catholic Academy  
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Stockton-on-Tees  
Teesside  
TS17 9DE

Dear Mrs Bowen,

**Special measures monitoring inspection of St Patrick's Catholic College, A Voluntary Catholic Academy**

Following my visit with Shelley Heseltine, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 25 to 26 June 2019, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in May 2018. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim advisory board, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Middlesbrough, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stockton-on-Tees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2018.**

- Urgently act to develop a culture of safeguarding in the school by:
  - improving pupils' behaviour, particularly when they are between lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes
  - ensuring that all pupils, and especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attend school and sustain high rates of attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make swift progress and outcomes improve by:
  - ensuring that all teachers provide pupils with work which builds on their existing knowledge, skills and understanding in order to deepen their thinking
  - ensuring that teachers make use of accurate assessment to plan engaging and challenging activities for pupils, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged pupils
  - making sure that teachers apply the school's assessment policy consistently to provide timely guidance for pupils so that they are aware of their next steps.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that all pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
  - leaders evaluate the impact of their actions effectively in order to accurately identify priorities for further improvement
  - improvement plans identify clear and precise actions, including measurable criteria for success, along with meaningful and manageable timelines
  - all teachers receive the appropriate professional development to develop their skills in the effective use of information about pupils' prior attainment so that they can plan learning to match pupils' different abilities
  - additional funding, such as pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up, and the funding to support pupils with SEND, is used effectively and that the impact of this funding on the outcomes of pupils is monitored rigorously by leaders and governors
  - governors hold school leaders to account through monitoring and checking processes which measure impact as well as actions.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be

undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25 June 2019 to 26 June 2019**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. Inspectors talked with subject leaders about their improvement activities. Inspectors also talked to groups of pupils in meetings and around the school site. Inspectors met four members of the interim advisory board, including the vice-chair. Inspectors talked to the chief executive officer of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust. In addition, inspectors met the consultant headteacher who was commissioned by the trust to support and monitor improvement. Inspectors scrutinised current behaviour and attendance information and explored safeguarding practices. Inspectors also discussed the school's progress in meeting targets in its development plan. Inspectors scrutinised the quality of pupils' work in books in a range of subjects.

### **Context**

Since the January 2019 monitoring inspection, the acting deputy headteacher has been permanently appointed to his post. In addition, a senior leader has recently taken up responsibility for teaching and learning. The trust has recently appointed a trust standards leader and subject directors for English and mathematics. These colleagues will be taking up their roles in readiness for September 2019.

Leaders have appointed a number of temporary teachers and supply teachers to fill gaps in teaching capacity in a number of subjects, including mathematics.

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

Leaders continue to act with moral purpose and a commitment to the school and the wider community. Since the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have continued to secure improvement in pupils' behaviour. The school environment is becoming more purposeful and productive. Leaders are developing better systems to check and track school improvement, and the capacity of senior leadership is continuing to develop. However, leaders' actions to secure improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not been rapid enough. In some cases, their actions have been hampered by staff absence and a reliance on temporary staffing.

In the first two terms, leaders commissioned an external consultant to provide training for teachers on areas such as lesson planning and curriculum development. Subject leaders reviewed their curriculum plans and teachers began to pay more attention to the prior ability of pupils in their classes. Although teachers benefited

from this training, the school has not had structures in place to drive through teaching improvements with the necessary urgency.

In the early part of the summer term, leaders appointed a senior leader to lead developments in teaching and learning. He has worked in partnership with a local outstanding school to develop expertise. In a short space of time, new frameworks for teaching have been introduced. This is beginning to provide staff with strategies to help pupils to recall knowledge and skills in their subjects. New assessment practices are also being introduced. However, a year on from the previous section 5 inspection, these initiatives remain at too early a stage of development and the pace of change has not been rapid enough. As a result, pupils' progress remains far too variable.

Subject leaders have had opportunities to work with subject networks and colleagues from other schools to develop their expertise. In subjects such as English, there is evidence of a more convincing rationale to support curriculum development. Leaders have also reviewed support for pupils with SEND. Pupils value the supportive environment on offer. However, their support plans do not show, with sufficient clarity, how their needs will be addressed in specific subject areas.

Leaders have addressed other areas for improvement from the May 2018 inspection more effectively. Actions to track the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils are more focused. There are signs that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress and that their attendance is improving. The pastoral team are becoming better trained in providing support through counselling and early help. More concerted actions are being taken to capture pupils' views on behaviour and teaching.

The interim advisory board continues to meet on a monthly basis to check progress. The board has recruited a parental representative, who is providing much needed parental perspective on the change process. A parents' forum has been established to heighten parental awareness of initiatives to improve attendance and teaching. Minutes from the interim advisory board show that they are providing greater support and challenge to leaders. For example, board minutes show them rightly commending staff for the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, but also questioning why wider enrichment activities have not been established. The board are using their expertise to track the effect of pupil premium funding with greater focus.

The chief executive officer of the trust has continued to invest substantial resources into the school. This investment has bolstered actions to improve attendance and to support behaviour. A series of appointments have recently been made to improve teaching, learning and assessment across the trust. These appointments include a new trust standards leader and subject directors for English and mathematics. It is not possible to assess the impact of these appointments as at the time of the

inspection they had not taken up their roles.

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

Actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not been introduced with the urgency outlined in the section 5 inspection report of May 2018. Leaders' aspirations to improve the quality of teaching have been undermined by staffing absences and an over-reliance on temporary staffing. Despite increased training, subject leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are more aware of the prior knowledge and abilities of pupils in their classrooms, but learning is not consistently pitched to match pupils' abilities.

The recent appointment of a leader with responsibility for teaching and learning is building internal capacity and momentum for improvement. He has raised the profile of new teaching initiatives with staff and is securing greater consistency in the introduction of new approaches to planning and assessment. Pupils are also showing an appreciation of these new developments, with a greater focus on retaining key knowledge and skills. There is a clear rationale behind these developments, but pupils have not had sufficient opportunity to benefit from these new practices.

In subjects such as science and history, there is evidence that these strategies are beginning to improve the quality of work in pupils' books. Pupils are taking increasing pride in the presentation of their work. However, marked variation remains between subjects, with much weaker practice evident in mathematics. Learning routines are improving, although there are still too many occasions where learning is undermined by a lack of attention, particularly where pupils are taught by temporary teachers.

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

Since the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have continued to secure a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions. In addition, there have been fewer incidents of pupils removed from classrooms to the school's behaviour support unit. Senior leaders and pastoral leaders continue to provide a strong presence at breaktimes, lunchtimes and transitions between lessons. Pupils were seen lining up at the start of morning and afternoon sessions in orderly ways.

There has been a reduction in the number of incidents where poor behaviour has resulted in pupils being injured, although this remains too high. In discussions, pupils commented on improving behaviour, although they felt that this varied across subjects. They felt that behaviour was much weaker in lessons where staffing was less consistent. Pupils' perceptions of behaviour also varied across year groups. Leaders are aware of this, and are putting tailored provision in place to support pupils who display more challenging behaviour. A number of pupils taking part in alternative provision, including a sports-based programme, talked positively about

how these initiatives were helping them to engage more productively with school life.

Senior leaders have built the capacity of the pastoral team. All pastoral leaders have received training in early help. They are supporting pupils at an earlier stage to manage issues before they escalate. In addition, leaders are exploring new approaches to counselling to better meet pupils' social and emotional needs. Leaders are combining individual support for pupils with higher needs alongside group support for issues such as coping with examination stress.

The attendance team has continued to invest considerable time and energy in supporting pupils and families to improve attendance. The team has made over 300 home visits and held a similar number of one-to-one discussions with pupils. Leaders are combining support for pupils and families with the use of sanctions when necessary. Leaders efforts have had success in improving attendance for disadvantaged pupils and achieving a slight improvement in girls' attendance. Rates of persistent absence have also declined since the previous monitoring inspection. Pupils in Year 7, less affected by a legacy of lower expectations, have attendance rates above those seen nationally. However, these successes have been tempered by a fall in boys' attendance and in the attendance of pupils with SEND. Overall rates of attendance remain in line with those seen last year.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The school's own information on pupils' progress and attainment shows that outcomes are not improving rapidly enough. At key stage 3, pupils' attainment in mathematics is significantly lower than it is in English. The school's most recent information for Year 11 pupils points to pupils making slightly weaker progress than the previous year. A smaller proportion are on track to achieve grade 5 and above in English and mathematics. In contrast, there are signs that disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make better progress.

Work in books shows that pupils are taking more pride in their presentation. The recently introduced strategies to help pupils to recall knowledge and skills are beginning to enhance pupils' knowledge. Standards do vary between subjects, with the improving standards evident in history and science tempered by weaker standards in mathematics. Many of these new approaches are at a relatively early stage of development. Overall, a year on from the previous section 5 inspection, pupils' attainment and progress are not improving quickly enough

### **External support**

School leaders have commissioned support for teaching and learning from an external consultant for one day a week. This has recently been phased out as the school has appointed its own teaching and learning leader. The school has continued to receive support from a consultant headteacher to develop leadership,

monitoring systems and to review standards of teaching. The trust continues to commission additional support for attendance. While these actions are leading to improvements in behaviour and leadership, they have had less effect on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.