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Christopher Gabbett
Principal
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Dear Mr Gabbett

Short inspection of Trinity Catholic School

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Gwendoline Onyon, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your staff and governors have worked with pupils and parents to create an inclusive and stimulating learning environment. There is support for the school from all members of your community. This is because you and your staff lead and teach with a clear moral purpose. Everyone is valued. Pupils and staff who spoke with inspectors were eager to talk about their achievements, the successes of others and their hopes for the future.

Learning and pupils' welfare are evident priorities of the school. Pupils benefit from effective teaching that engages their interest. Pupils are attentive, work hard and achieve well. Pupils' classroom learning is complemented by a wide range of out-of-school activities, as well as visits nearby and abroad. Pupils' conduct is typically exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. There is an atmosphere of calm and order as pupils move between lessons and as they socialise at breaktimes.

As pupils progress through the school, they become increasingly confident individuals, able to debate and discuss issues. Pupils recognise that other people's views, experiences and beliefs can be different from their own. Pupils treat others with equal respect and do not accept prejudice.

At the last inspection, inspectors noted many strengths about the school, including leadership, teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour. Two areas were identified for

specific attention. These were to improve teaching further by monitoring it more closely, and to ensure that new faculty leaders share best practice. Leaders now make sure staff share what works with each other. You and your leaders check the quality of teaching with regularity and combine this with a training programme that teachers find helpful and thought provoking. The strongest teaching, including highly effective use of the school's assessment policy, supports pupils' good progress. However, this is not consistently the case across subjects. The disadvantaged pupils, in particular, could be challenged more in order to reach higher standards. You have also identified that stretching the most able pupils to reach higher standards is a key priority for further development.

Leaders are evaluative and reflective. You have designed an approach to pupil improvement that you call 'Head, Heart, Hands', and this is well understood by pupils and staff. It places the responsibility for each pupil's improvement on the school community, so there is a real sense of cooperation. Pupils are taught how to gain in skill and understanding, but they must put effort into their learning and expect to receive high-quality guidance. You know there is more to be done to help every child understand your approach. You demonstrate a very positive attitude to school improvement. Teachers, form tutors and governors know the pupils well.

Governors speak glowingly of the school's mission. Alongside teachers, they are strong advocates for the school and enjoy helping to create a positive culture for learning and success. You help them take difficult decisions around staffing and the curriculum. Together, you help each other and are open about what works and what does not.

Pupils are making increasingly good progress. Leaders recognise that they must ensure that pupils overcome any barriers to achievement. You make no excuses for the underachievement of some pupils and put thought and effort into raising standards. Your planning and monitoring have sufficient rigour to continue and build upon the improvements you have made so far.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Recruitment procedures are sound. Comprehensive training ensures that staff are aware of their duties and the signs to look out for that might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm.

They know when and how to refer any concerns to the leader responsible for safeguarding. Leaders work with others agencies when needed to ensure that pupils are supported and protected. Your pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves and others safe. They are highly articulate about their rights and responsibilities in your school and the wider community.

Inspection findings

- You are able to track the improvements in pupils' progress well. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of which subjects are strengths, for example modern foreign languages. You are also clear about which pupil groups have been

underachieving, for example the most able disadvantaged pupils. You are increasingly effective at identifying how to address underachievement. Your measurement of the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school indicates that they are making good progress. This is a significant improvement compared with previous years. Work seen in these pupils' books supports your view. We saw disadvantaged pupils successfully challenged by effective teaching and doing at least as well as other pupils with the same attainment on entry.

- Your scrutiny of the school's work is rigorous. For example, you commissioned an external review of the spending of your pupil premium funding, and have implemented many of the subsequent recommendations. You are working closely with the local authority to get all the advice you can to improve outcomes for all pupils. You have formed strong partnerships with schools in the area. Working alongside staff in other schools has improved teachers' ability to make accurate predictions of pupils' test and examination results. It also means you are able to learn from the most effective practice and share your own successes with others.
- You carefully track the progress and outcomes of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Across a range of subjects, and especially in English and mathematics, these pupils are making better progress than in previous years. Their progress is now at least as good as other pupils nationally. You have aspirational targets for these pupils. You hold each other to account for their targets and plan teaching that is matched carefully to pupils' needs.
- In 2016, pupils across the ability range made broadly similar progress to other pupils nationally with the same attainment on entry. You have recognised that some of the most able boys did not do as well as they should. In response, you have put in place a challenging range of teaching and learning plans. You have improved the level of challenge in the classroom and put more accurate and aspirational target setting in place. There are early signs of success, as seen in your school data-tracking information and the quality of teaching seen during the inspection.
- Because the quality of teaching is improving, pupils are more engaged with learning than before and want to come to school. Consequently, attendance is improving rapidly. Last year, attendance overall was better than the national average. However, some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not attend regularly. This has improved remarkably since last year, with all pupil groups now attending regularly. This is because you have improved your support for pupils at risk of not attending. You are working in partnership with agencies outside the school and provide support to families, when needed.
- You are successful in using your monitoring and evaluation of teaching to bring about improvement. You plan and deliver high-quality training for your staff in aspects such as questioning skills, lesson planning and using data to inform planning. As a result, teaching is becoming more effective and outcomes are improving for all pupils. In 2016, for example, lower-ability students in English and science made especially good progress because you had motivated and engaged these pupils well. In 2016, progress in mathematics pupils was not so strong, but this year's pupil tracking shows improved progress. Current pupils are doing well.
- In 2016, 64% of pupils secured grade C and above in English and mathematics, a higher figure than that seen in 2015 and above the national average. A lower

percentage than the national average secured a grade C or above in the English Baccalaureate. Your current Year 11 and Year 10 pupils are expected to reach higher standards in these subjects because you have introduced better training, tracking and monitoring of teaching. Results in modern foreign languages were very high, and significantly above the national average. You are making sure that the leader of this subject works with other teachers so they can improve their planning, assessment and subject review. Pupils read widely, with enthusiasm and interest.

- You are making improvements to the sixth form. Students are expected to achieve higher results this year than was the case last year. You have introduced more robust leadership, and have helped pupils to become more aspirational. Applications to universities have risen and pupils have a more challenging programme of study. There is improved support for writing UCAS applications and more rewarding work experience placements are available.
- Governors know the strengths in the school's leadership and have a grasp of what could be better still. The school is characterised by a commitment to the well-being of each member of the school community. This is valued highly by all; responses to staff, pupil and parent surveys are overwhelmingly positive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should:

- embed the strategies to accelerate progress for the most able disadvantaged pupils
- further reduce the overall absence of disadvantaged pupils, especially those who are frequently absent.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Graham Tyrer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your two deputy principals, the chair of governors and other leaders throughout the day. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and agreed the key areas we would focus on during the inspection.

During the day, we held further discussions with you and other senior leaders. I met other members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors visited parts of eight lessons, two jointly with school leaders, and scrutinised a selection of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them. Inspectors took account of 59 staff survey responses and 97 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors considered 91 parent responses by free-text and 72 responses to the pupil survey. One inspector spoke with pupils at lunchtime. Inspectors analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, and safeguarding policies and procedures.