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Ms Clare Cantle
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Dear Ms Cantle

Short inspection of All Saints Catholic School and Technology College

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018 with Beverley Johnston and Jeffrey Quaye, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Since your appointment as headteacher you have given a sharp focus to identifying and addressing areas in the school which need attention. You and other leaders have an uncompromising attitude towards raising school standards and are making key changes to ensure sustained improvement. You are not complacent and realise that initiatives need to be fully embedded to have maximum impact. The school was recently redesignated a teaching school. This recognises the continued work to develop good-quality teaching and learning at All Saints Catholic School and Technology College, and the support given to other schools.

An inclusive ethos is a central pillar of the school. New staff spoken to by inspectors feel 'listened to and cared for'. Staff value the many opportunities leaders provide which support and encourage their professional development. On the day of the inspection pupils were very well behaved, interacting with respect and courtesy. Pupils develop to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and the wider community. Pupils spoke with pride about their fundraising work. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were very supportive of the school and your leadership.

Students' progress and attainment continue to be good. A well-above-average proportion of students attained GCSE grade 5 or above in English and mathematics in 2017. Attainment in English was particularly high. Although disadvantaged pupils

attained less well than others, they made above-average progress from their starting points in most subjects.

Leaders are very focussed on continuing to ensure consistently high-quality teaching in some subjects, including mathematics. From the sample of staff seen by inspectors, feedback was given to pupils but the quality was sometimes variable.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed and of a high quality.

Pupils' welfare is the priority for staff, who are well trained and knowledgeable about potential risks young people face. The training focus this year has been on female genital mutilation, the 'Prevent' duty and child sexual exploitation. Staff were very clear as to whom they would report any safeguarding concerns. Governors have undertaken safer recruitment training and the suitability of staff to work at the school is always checked. You check on the quality of safeguarding through external validation of your provision.

Pupils spoken to by inspectors were clear that they felt safe in school. They said that bullying, in all its forms, would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and were aware of the dangers of radicalisation. Through the personal, social and health education programme, pupils said they have learned about keeping safe, especially with regard to fireworks, street safety and drugs.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, four areas of focus were agreed. The first of these was the progress of all learners in mathematics. This was because examination results in 2017, although well above the national average, were not as strong as results in English. Also, the GCSE results for those retaking mathematics in the sixth form were poor. Inspectors visited classrooms, spoke to staff and analysed data.
- A mathematics review was undertaken by the local authority at the request of the school. This has led to an action plan identifying key strategies for improvement, which are having a demonstrable impact. Sharper monitoring of teachers' work and pupils' progress is effectively supporting further improvements. Mathematical skills are actively promoted throughout the school in other subjects. 'Drop down' days on numeracy and problem-solving have been used well to further develop mathematical skills. In the sixth form, improved timetabling of mathematics GCSE and specialist teaching are having a positive impact on students' progress.
- In some classes visited by inspectors, good subject knowledge was evident in the teaching and pupils' books showed that progress was being made. However, in other classes there were some gaps in pupils' understanding of key concepts, which limited their progress.

- The second area of the focus for the inspection was the progress of the most able pupils. This was because progress from their starting points is not as strong as other groups of learners in some subjects, including modern foreign languages.
- Teachers are fully aware this is a key priority for development. Leaders have put in place a comprehensive professional development programme for them to develop their skills. This is enabling a wider range of strategies to be used which specifically support the learning of the most able pupils. Teachers regularly receive a newsletter and 'take away' teaching tips, which are valued by staff. On the day of the inspection, pupils spoke positively about being part of the 'brilliant club' and how they had been provided with inspiring opportunities.
- On the day of the inspection, inspectors saw teachers providing challenge for the most able. Work seen showed regular examples of pupils reviewing their own writing and actively responding to teachers' guidance. In a French class, pupils were clear on what they had to do to correct and improve their work. You are now working towards establishing a culture where pupils take responsibility for their own learning.
- The third area of focus was the progress of sixth-form students. In 2017, progress on vocational courses was strong. However, overall progress and results for students on A-level courses were lower than for vocational courses. Inspectors visited classes, looked at data, and spoke with the head of sixth form.
- New leadership in the sixth form is very focused on what needs to be done to raise standards. The assessment, monitoring and tracking system has been revised. It now provides staff at all levels with useful and accurate information to support students more effectively. The attendance and progress of students who study at other sites is very well monitored to ensure that these students are on track to achieve their targets. The school has introduced an 'excellence pathway' for the most able students and has provided useful guidance to them.
- In the majority of classes visited by inspectors, progress of students was good because activities were planned to meet their needs. In sociology, for example, students were discussing 'the feminist explanation of the role of religion in society today'; they were being challenged to develop complex arguments. In student folders, constructive feedback was seen. The school's robust assessment data shows that students studying A levels are now making strong progress.
- The fourth area of focus was the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This was because your analysis shows that disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other learners in some subjects, suggesting that some strategies are particularly effective. However, there is still some inconsistency in a few subjects.
- Leaders have given priority to disadvantaged pupils. An external review of pupil premium funding has taken place and the resulting strategies are used effectively to support learners. Governors ensure that the spending has measurable outcomes linked to pupils' progress. Staff are responsible for monitoring and tracking progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders are aware of those disadvantaged pupils at risk of underachieving and detailed support plans are in place.

- In most classes visited on the day of the inspection, inspectors saw disadvantaged pupils making progress in line with their peers. All pupils were making the best progress where bespoke interventions corrected misconceptions and stimulated deeper thinking.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching of mathematics across the school is of a consistently high quality
- in line with the school's policy, effective feedback is given to pupils so that they can improve and develop their work.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at work and spoke with pupils. Inspectors met with school leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and the head of sixth form. The lead inspector spoke with governors, a representative from the local authority and a parent. In addition, inspectors considered responses to the staff survey and pupil survey which were part of the inspection. Also, inspectors analysed the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.