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Paul Dickinson
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Dear Mr Dickinson

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Archbishop Beck Catholic College

Following my remote inspection with Jasper Green, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 March 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require improvement.

This monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 2017.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- focus on the subject knowledge that pupils will learn and separate this from how subjects will be delivered.

Context

- Since the previous inspection in July 2019, the school's staffing has been generally stable. There have been only a few changes. A new senior leader and subject leader have been appointed. A new governor has been appointed to the governing body.
- During the autumn term, all pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 were educated remotely at some point. Some sixth-form students also studied at home. Pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 were affected more than other year groups. These year groups were educated remotely for about a third of the time.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were being educated at home. Up to a tenth of pupils are able to attend on site. This includes vulnerable pupils and all pupils with an education, health and care plan. This group studies remotely on some days and comes into school on other days, depending on their individual circumstances.

Main findings

- You and other leaders want to do the right thing for pupils and their families. During the pandemic, leaders have focused on pupils' well-being as well as providing an appropriate education in the current circumstances. You are looking ahead to anticipate what will need to be done to make sure pupils' return to school is successful. All pupils are being invited into school in advance of their return date for a programme of activities to prepare and support them.
- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection in July 2019, leaders had introduced a new curriculum in Years 7 to 9. This is now well established. It is having a positive impact on the range of pupils' GCSE choices. The proportion of pupils choosing EBacc subjects is rising.
- Leaders have made adaptations to subjects and the sequencing of units of work. For example, they have selected content which is better suited to remote education and allowed more time for its delivery. During the autumn term, leaders put a recovery curriculum in place. They adapted subjects to help pupils catch up on content. After pupils have returned at the end of the current national lockdown, leaders plan to check what pupils have learned and review the curriculum again.
- You and other leaders have set consistent expectations for how pupils learn in their lessons. However, leaders and staff confuse subject content with the

teaching methods that they use to deliver it. At the moment, there is insufficient focus on subject content. Leaders prioritise 'how' subjects are taught rather than 'what' should be learned.

- Leaders manage pupils' transfer from one stage of their education to another successfully. They make sure that pupils have a clear progression route into employment and further study. In Year 13, applications to university have continued remotely. Students have benefited from assemblies, information sessions and individual support. In Year 11, careers advice and the sixth-form application process have continued to run. Leaders have worked creatively to develop online alternatives for work-related activities, such as presentations from employers.
- Leaders responsible for vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities check on their well-being, attendance and engagement regularly. Every pupil has a named key worker to provide support and follow up on any concerns with families. This has built trust between families and the school. Leaders have maintained links with external agencies from the local authority to provide high-quality support for pupils through the pandemic.
- Pupils educated on site follow broadly the same remote education programme as those working at home. A programme of practical classes enhances their learning in some subjects, such as physical education and drama. Weaker readers in Years 7 to 9 receive support depending on their specific needs. Pupils continue to get help with reading remotely. Some wider reading activities, such as author talks, have also happened remotely.
- Governors are knowledgeable. They understand the school well and have provided highly effective leadership during the pandemic. They have met fortnightly with senior leaders throughout this time, to scrutinise decisions about the curriculum, remote education and the level of care for pupils.
- Support from external agencies is strong. Staff and leaders contribute to and benefit from opportunities provided by the local authority and the archdiocese. These external partners help the school to develop in a wide range of aspects, including pupils' well-being, the curriculum and remote education.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We met with you and your senior team, and the chairs of the governors' committees. I held telephone conversations with the school improvement partner and representatives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and Liverpool local authority. These conversations focused on leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also met with subject leaders and leaders responsible for special educational needs to discuss the remote education provision. We met with some pupils being educated on site and scrutinised a sample of remote education activities in a range of subjects.

We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 43 free-text responses, and 91 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Hallett
Her Majesty's Inspector