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20 June 2017

Mr Marius Carney
Principal
English Martyrs Catholic School
Anstey Lane
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Dear Mr Carney

Short inspection of English Martyrs Catholic School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Ian Colling, 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, supported by a highly effective and ambitious senior team, have managed well the challenge of leading the school community during a major building programme since 2014. You have done this with enthusiasm and determination that the growth of the school would only be of benefit for your pupils. These changes, coupled with an accurate, honest and reflective view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, have led to improvements in standards at the end of key stage 4 and the sixth form in 2016. Overall, pupils now make the progress that is expected of them, and many far exceed it. You are driven by a strong moral purpose to ensure that your pupils succeed, and you make it your business to understand the barriers that pupils face and help them overcome these. Parents are very positive about the school.

The school is a cohesive and inclusive community in which pupils are respectful of each other. They are polite, courteous and conduct themselves around the school with maturity. Pupils appreciate the caring, positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils and, as a result, the school is a harmonious environment for learning. One pupil told inspectors, 'You feel safe to be who you want to be.' Your actions as leaders reflect the school's motto of 'May they all be one'. This ethos is also at the heart of the strong sixth-form provision.

Pupils enjoy coming to the school. This is indicated by how regularly they attend. In 2016, the overall attendance rate was well above the national average. The school

has worked well with any groups of pupils who missed school for long periods. This has been very effective and the school's information shows that no group of pupils attends less than their peers.

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with providing greater challenge for pupils, particularly in mathematics, checking the learning of disadvantaged pupils more regularly and ensuring that the most effective teaching is shared among all staff. You have tackled these areas swiftly and effectively. The improved monitoring systems and detailed analysis of assessment information are now used by your senior and middle leaders to identify quickly any underachievement among individual pupils or groups of pupils. You have trained teachers to use this information to improve their planning. As a result, pupils are making faster progress. You agree, however, that not all teachers use assessment information consistently in their lessons to maximise pupils' progress.

You have trained staff at all levels to make sure they work with each other to improve the quality of teaching. Staff spoke enthusiastically about how opportunities to observe each other teaching have led to pupils making better progress in their lessons. The school's own information shows how the quality of teaching has improved. The school is outward looking and is making the most of the strong ties with local Catholic secondary schools and with the Leicester Education Partnership.

You place great importance on ensuring that the school caters well for all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Leaders and the governing body now rigorously check the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You have expertly included many of these pupils in your school's wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and musical instrument tuition. Both inspectors saw teachers using effective strategies to stretch all pupils in lessons and in their work. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils attend school more and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 making at least the expected progress is much higher than in previous years.

This improvement has not extended to the presentation of pupils' work. Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books. The presentation of pupils' written work in their books is not of sufficiently high standard, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. You are aware of this issue.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that keeping pupils safe takes a high priority at your school and staff 'live and breathe it daily'. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have ensured that all arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Leadership of safeguarding is excellent. As a result, staff work diligently with parents and local agencies, such as the police and social services, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate

training to enable them to support pupils where issues affect them. Leaders also regularly check to see how effective this training has been. Consequently, parents and pupils, especially those who need additional help, are positive about the care and support they receive.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about keeping safe, through assemblies and lessons. An example of this is 'Kayleigh's love story', which has been used to teach pupils how to stay safe online. As a result of this, pupils say that they feel very safe in school, and this is overwhelmingly supported by the views of parents. Pupils told inspectors that instances of bullying are rare. When they do arise, pupils are very confident that staff deal with them swiftly.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have taken effective action in using pupil premium funding so that disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress. Strong collaboration between subject and senior leaders has led to a strong emphasis on using agreed teaching strategies to improve learning. We saw this on our tour of the school and with the other inspector. Pupils also said they appreciate the challenge they experience in lessons.
- In 2016, pupils at the end of Year 11 who had special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make good progress in many subjects from their starting points in Year 7. The new coordinator for special educational needs closely monitors the academic progress of these pupils and regularly trains staff to improve their teaching. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities now make the same progress as their peers who have the same starting points. In some cases, they make faster progress. Leaders have also ensured that over half of the pupils with an education, health and care plan are learning a musical instrument.
- You have been well supported by the governing body. Together, you have made the necessary changes to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. As a result of greater collaboration with external partners, leaders have ensured that pupils make faster progress in mathematics throughout the school. The school's own information shows that standards at the end of key stage 4 in 2017 will be much higher than they were in 2016.
- Staff have very high expectations of behaviour. Leaders have successfully reduced fixed-term exclusions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have strengthened the school's relationship with parents and carers by training up relevant staff.
- Attendance is now a real strength of the school. Your strong moral purpose has guided other leaders to work even more effectively. As a result of the strong collaboration between pastoral leaders and support staff, all groups of pupils have improved their attendance. For example, attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now near to the national average. Pupils told inspectors that they liked the attendance rewards scheme.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers develop strategies to improve the presentation of pupils' written work, particularly among disadvantaged pupils
- teachers make better and more consistent use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Harkireet Sohel
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, subject leaders and a group of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the senior leaders with responsibility for achievement, behaviour and safeguarding. Along with a senior leader, we visited eight lessons during the day. Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. We met with members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner. We scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, and analysed data about the attendance, behaviour and progress of current pupils. We also considered 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the school's own records of parents' views. There were no responses from the online survey for staff.