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Mr Paul Greig
Headteacher
All Saints Catholic Voluntary Academy
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Dear Mr Greig

Short inspection of All Saints Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Catherine Garrett, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a cohesive and inclusive community that is characterised by pupils who are highly respectful of each other and very polite. Pupils conduct themselves very well, both in classrooms and around the school when they are less supervised by adults. Pupils have a high regard for their learning and they told inspectors that the quality of teaching and their lessons were 'the best bits of school'.

Since the last inspection, the school has converted to an academy and joined The Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust. There have been several new leaders that have joined the school in this time, including you as the headteacher in September 2015, the deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. The points for improvement identified in the report following the 2012 inspection have been addressed well. You have raised achievement in science and ensured that students in Year 12 make as much progress as those in Year 13. The clear direction and strong leadership you have provided have given fresh energy to increasing the pace of improvement. You have been supported well by other senior leaders and by governors.

The overall achievement of pupils has remained strong since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress overall, including those who are disadvantaged. These pupils are catching up with other pupils nationally.

Your self-evaluation is accurate. You identify precisely what is working well and most of those areas in the school that need to be strengthened. You have worked with governors to ensure that clearly defined priorities for the school have been developed and you have put the required actions in place. There is still more to do. You and the governors are aware of the improvements needed to ensure that all pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable. Boys' performance lags behind girls' performance in most subjects, although it is much improved.

Leaders have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and there is more consistency in how well pupils achieve across a wide range of subjects. Subject leaders are more involved in monitoring how well pupils are progressing in their areas of responsibility and are putting in place strategies for improvement. However, there is room for developing these roles still further. For example, in the past, leaders have not worked alongside other colleagues when assessing pupils' work to ensure that their assessments are accurate. The result was that leaders were over-optimistic about how well pupils were achieving.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of school life. Governors and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality.

The school is a safe place. The overwhelming majority of parents believe that the school keeps their children safe and cares for them well. Pupils state that there are few concerns about behaviour or bullying. Their views are supported by the low number of serious behaviour incidents and exclusions that are recorded. When they do occur, they are dealt with quickly by staff. The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to explore how to stay safe. Inspectors observed several lessons where pupils were very effectively leading discussions on internet safety with their tutor group.

All staff are fully aware of all aspects of safeguarding, as a result of regular and effective training. The school keeps meticulous records of the training of staff, including those who join the school part-way through the year.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures take account of the latest guidance issued and all the required employment checks are carried out before staff appointments are confirmed.

You and your team work well with external agencies and value the support you receive from the local authority regarding safeguarding concerns. Cases that need referring by the school are dealt with promptly and timely action is taken.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is shown in their above-average attendance. However, disadvantaged pupils' absence and persistent absence have been higher than those of their peers in the past few years. The school has taken steps to rectify

this, with some success. There are positive signs that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is now catching up with that of other pupils.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of what is working well in the school and what has led to improvements in pupils' achievement over the past three years. They are also clear about what still needs to be done. The positive impact of their actions can be seen in the achievement of current pupils.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, has improved significantly across a wide range of subjects. Disadvantaged pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making strong progress in literacy and numeracy because of the additional provision put in place through the school's 'John Paul Centre'. This is accelerating pupils' progress by boosting their skills, especially when these are identified as barriers to succeeding. The progress of pupils is monitored closely and appropriate next steps are put in place.
- Leaders have conducted a full curriculum review which has resulted in the school being able to provide more appropriate courses for pupils, especially for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen and this is providing a stronger platform for the next steps in their education after Year 11. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities shows that the improvements made up until the end of last year have continued.
- Boys have not achieved as well as girls for several years. Last year in English, you put in place a programme of support to accelerate the rate of progress of the boys. This resulted in boys achieving outcomes in English that were closer to those of the girls. In most other subjects, boys did not achieve as well as girls. Astutely, you now plan to take the strategy used in English last year to raise the rates of progress of boys in other subject areas.
- Strong leadership of the sixth form is improving student outcomes in Year 12. Ambitious targets and a readiness to challenge underperformance are ensuring that current students are making good progress.
- As a result of effective teaching and new leadership, pupils are making better progress in science. Leaders introduced a new curriculum for science last year that has raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve. In 2016, the progress pupils made improved considerably from the previous two years.
- Leaders and governors know that pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English. Recruiting effective mathematics teachers has been an issue for the school last year. However, as a result of leaders monitoring more closely the progress pupils make in mathematics, current pupils are achieving more strongly.
- Leaders have undertaken a root-and-branch review of the school's strategies for improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have been successful in raising rates of attendance for these groups, which are now closer to the national average for all pupils. However, the below-average attendance of disadvantaged pupils

remains a barrier to better progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils match those of other pupils nationally
- the achievement of boys is raised across the school by extending the effective strategies already undertaken in English into other subject areas
- curriculum leaders share good practice both internally and with external partners to improve assessment practice and curriculum development.

I am copying this letter to the chair of The Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jamie Clarke
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors held meetings with a range of staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, the leaders responsible for provision for disadvantaged pupils, designated staff for safeguarding, staff responsible for attendance and representatives of the governing body and the multi-academy trust. Inspectors made a series of visits to lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, including the sixth form. They talked with pupils about their reading. They met with groups of pupils to discuss the work of the school and talked with them also in lessons and informally during breaks. The views of parents expressed using Parent View, and others collected through surveys carried out by the school, were considered. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents, including safeguarding records, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, a range of policy documents and other information about pupil achievement, behaviour and attendance.