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Michael Antram
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Antram

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of St Boniface's RC College

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 4 July 2024, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, trust leaders, and governors and members of staff the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I visited lessons and the 'reset' room. I met with leaders to discuss suspensions and attendance. I discussed with some pupils their experiences of what has changed at the school. I also reviewed school improvement documents, visited lessons and met with teachers. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you have been appointed as executive headteacher and a new head of school is now in post. In addition, there have been significant changes to key policies, such as behaviour and attendance. The school is now working more closely with trust leaders. The school has started to make progress with the areas of improvement set out in the report. While some of the work needs time to embed, it is evident that the school is moving in the right direction.

The school has worked to improve the curriculum and ensure that it is suitably broad and ambitious. Small steps have been accurately identified to ensure that pupils make progress through the curriculum. Mechanisms are in place to check pupils' understanding. However, these are not yet used with consistent efficiency. As a result, misconceptions are not always tackled with the immediacy that they need to be. More work needs to be done to ensure that gaps in pupils' understanding are identified and swiftly acted on.

Since the recent changes in leadership, you have wasted no time in acting on the areas for improvement. Alongside the head of school, you have accelerated necessary changes to improve behaviour, attendance and the quality of education. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to develop further. A robust improvement plan is used meaningfully to ensure the school is making progress at an appropriate pace. Governors and trust leaders use this plan to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the impact of their actions.

You introduced a new behaviour policy with increased expectations at the start of the year and this saw an initial rise in suspensions. This has since decreased. However, single suspensions are higher than last year overall, so it is too soon to know if the new policy has had the desired impact. The number of repeat suspensions has steadily decreased over the last two years. Pupils and staff feel that behaviour has improved. Lesson visits demonstrate that low-level disruption is rare. Pupils understand the school's expectations of them and think that these are fair. Staff and pupils appreciate the increased consistency with which the behaviour policy is applied. There is evidence of reasonable adjustments being made for pupils, where appropriate.

The school has worked hard this year to improve attendance, and the overall rate of attendance has increased. However, persistent absenteeism has risen and is high. The school is trying to work alongside pupils and their families to ensure that barriers to attendance are overcome. The school is identifying pupils earlier on to ensure that their attendance does not worsen. The school should continue to focus its efforts in this area.

The school has engaged with a wide range of external support, which has increased its capacity. The work of external partners is focused and has clear aims. You have also used external support to quality assure different areas of the school. Leaders at all levels speak positively about this experience and can point to specific examples of the impact that it has had.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of Plymouth CAST, the director of education for the Diocese of Plymouth, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Frances Bywater
His Majesty's Inspector