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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Michael Kiely
Headteacher
The Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School
Greenford Road
Greenford
Middlesex
UB6 9AW

Dear Mr Kiely

Short inspection of The Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018 with Louise Voden and Lynne Isham, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You, together with senior leaders, have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You use this to ensure that the quality of teaching is strong, and that teachers share their good practice. Consequently, pupils make progress that is well above the national average. Middle leaders also play an active role in developing the curriculum in their subjects. They also provide teachers with effective professional development, including in the teaching of literacy, and preparing for new A-Level and GCSE examinations. Staff responses to the Ofsted survey were positive about the school and its leadership. You set high standards for pupils' conduct which are clearly understood by pupils. As a result, pupils' behaviour is excellent. Parents are also positive about the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. All necessary pre-employment checks are carried out and logged on the central record,

which is well maintained. Staff make referrals to external agencies that are timely and appropriate. Staff follow up any concerns methodically. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, said that their children were happy and feel safe at the school.

Governors and members of staff receive regular safeguarding training. The safeguarding committee holds regular meetings with leaders to discuss any safeguarding issues or concerns. As a result, leaders are well informed. Leaders use a range of opportunities to focus pupils on keeping safe, such as assemblies, personal development days and visiting theatre groups.

Inspection findings

- Our first key line of enquiry, agreed at the start of the inspection, focused on how the school enables pupils to achieve strong outcomes at GCSE. Pupils' attainment and progress at GCSE were strong in both 2016 and 2017.
- You attribute this success to consistently strong teaching and good pupil attitudes to learning. Evidence of teaching and pupils' learning in key stages 3 and 4 supports this view. Teachers set tasks which challenge pupils of all abilities. Teachers ask strong and purposeful questions which probe pupils' understanding and motivate them to learn. In turn, this leads to excellent behaviour and rapid progress. In key stage 3 lessons, teachers prepare pupils extremely well for entry onto GCSE courses.
- The second agreed key line of enquiry looked at the extent to which pupils make equally good progress in different subjects.
- The high quality of teaching and learning throughout the school ensures that good standards of progress are maintained consistently across the curriculum. This is evident in quality of pupils' work in a broad range of subjects. In 2017, over three quarters of pupils in Year 11 opted for courses that contribute to the English Baccalaureate, with the majority achieving good passes in all subjects. Pupils also make strong progress in vocational courses, such as hospitality and catering.
- Teaching is also strong in a range of subjects at key stage 3. However, in music, drama and design technology pupils are not offered the same level of provision as in other key stage 3 subjects.
- Our third line of enquiry focused on the progress of particular groups of students in the sixth form: the most able students, and girls studying academic A levels. While both these groups of pupils achieved highly in 2016, their progress dipped in 2017.
- Leaders have implemented specific strategies to enable both these groups of students to make strong progress. These intervention strategies are having a positive impact for all students, including girls. Teachers ensure that sixth-form lessons contain a high level of challenge for most-able pupils across a wide range of subjects. This includes pupils being able to access higher level examination questions across mathematics, chemistry, biology, geography and religious studies. The high quality of teaching and learning enables pupils to develop the

knowledge, understanding and skills required for the highest performance at A level.

- Leaders ensure that teachers have a consistent approach to regular assessment, so that misunderstanding is quickly identified and addressed. Teachers also emphasise and develop subject-specific literacy, which enhances students' skills for the extended writing tasks required at A Level. Teachers design learning activities to enable all students to discuss, explore and deepen their thinking. Year 12 girls told inspectors about the helpful one-to-one support they receive from teachers. As a result, all students, including girls, are making good progress across a range of subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum in key stage 3 enables pupils to make good progress in all subject areas, including music, drama and design technology.

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

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Chisholm
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection.

Inspectors met with you and other senior leaders. They also met with middle leaders, leaders responsible for safeguarding and with sixth-form leaders. They held discussions with the chair of the governing body and met with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and examined documentation relating to safeguarding, including scrutiny of the single central record. Inspectors visited 24 lessons jointly with members from your senior leadership team. Inspectors evaluated pupils' work in books and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors considered responses to 83 staff questionnaires and 169 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.