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20 April 2018

Anthony Costello  
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Dear Mr Costello

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Savio Salesian College**

Following my visit to your school on 11 and 12 April 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection 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 since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in October 2016.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in October 2016.**

- Leaders must improve the attendance of pupils, by:
  - focusing on strategies that will bring the attendance of disadvantaged pupils to the same level as that of others nationally
  - rapidly reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent
  - ensuring that the whereabouts of absent pupils are known in order that these pupils can be kept safe.
- Leaders must improve the outcomes in mathematics, by:
  - setting aspirational targets that can be used to plan teaching that raises standards for pupils who have a range of starting points
  - increasing the amount of challenge for pupils, while allowing them time to practise and improve skills.
- Leaders at all levels in the school must drive improvement at a faster pace, by:
  - raising expectations and aspirations, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
  - reviewing the impact of school improvement strategies and planning for future improvement on the basis of this evaluation
  - meeting their statutory duty to deliver careers education, information, advice and guidance and ensure that those pupils who have currently missed out have additional opportunities to acquire this support
  - ensuring that governors challenge the school more effectively to reach ambitious targets
  - ensuring that pupil premium funding is spent effectively and improves outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 11 April 2018 to 12 April 2018**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. She also met with: the headteacher and his deputy; senior and middle leaders; staff with responsibility for safeguarding and attendance; a group of pupils; a group of teachers; three members of the governing body, including the chair; a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool; and a representative from the local authority. She observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects. She also observed how pupils behave around the school and talked to them informally.

### **Context**

A new headteacher took up his post in September 2017. He has been appointed on a two-year secondment, but the governors and the headteacher are keen for his position to become permanent at the end of this period. A planned staffing restructure that was due to take effect from January 2018 did not happen. A new staffing restructure is now due to take effect from 1 May 2018. A new head of mathematics has been in post since January 2017. A new chair of governors has been in place since November 2017. The school has seen a fall in the school roll since the last inspection, which has led to budgetary constraints.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher has brought much-needed focused leadership to the school. There is no doubting his commitment to the school and its wider community. His appointment has ensured that there is now a clarity to the leadership structure and a greater sense of urgency about moving the school forward. However, nearly a year had elapsed since the previous inspection before this appointment was made. During that time, leaders and managers were not taking the necessary action to ensure that the school no longer required special measures within the requisite timeframe. Consequently, the school is not far enough on its journey of improvement.

Staff and pupils spoke positively of the difference that the headteacher has made. One member of staff described him as 'a breath of fresh air' and spoke of the tangible improvement to morale within the school in the last six months. Pupils value his visible presence around school. They know he has their best interests at heart. They also like the way that he 'makes his standards clear'.

Leadership of the school has been further strengthened by the arrival of a new chair of governors. He has experience and expertise in the strategic leadership of schools in challenging circumstances and has wasted no time in using his skills to start to

improve the quality of governance. For example, the committee structure is now focused sharply on standards. The chair of governors has an accurate and realistic assessment of how far behind the school is on its journey and the enormity of the task ahead. The external review of governance that took place in June 2017 was of very limited use to the school. The new chair has improved the quality of governance significantly, but, again, too much time was lost before this happened. Other governors value his leadership and feel that he has improved their confidence. However, they recognise that they need to develop their own capacity further in order to provide the necessary challenge and support to leaders in school.

The school's current development plan is not fit for purpose. Although it clearly identifies the areas that require the most urgent improvement, the actions to bring these about are not specific or focused enough. More significantly, the targets and success criteria in the plan are pitched far too low. For example, the progress target for Year 11 at the end of this academic year would mean that the school would not meet the government's current floor standard.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium was carried out in March 2017. This thorough review included a large number of recommendations. Leaders have acted on some of these, but have not used the review effectively enough to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Improved leadership of mathematics means that there are now consistent planning, teaching and assessment methods across the department. The head of department has introduced a new key stage 3 curriculum, which is helping pupils to develop their mathematical skills. Following poor outcomes in English in 2017, the local authority is providing ongoing support to develop the leadership capacity in this department.

Leaders ensure that the school meets its statutory duty to deliver careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The leadership of this area is strong, and pupils in Years 7 to 11 benefit from an effective CEIAG programme. The school is well on the way to meeting fully all of the Gatsby benchmarks for good careers provision. Without doubt, providing pupils with high-quality CEIAG is a priority for leaders. This has contributed to a significant increase in the number of pupils who progress to further education, training or employment at the end of Year 11. This figure is now above the national average.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

An effective system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school now exists. Leadership of this area is strong. There is now a clear understanding of the link between the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Leaders' evaluations are now focused on the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress. Teachers value the professional development opportunities. They appreciate, for example, the way that changes to the marking policy have been

made in a fair and transparent way. In this collaborative environment, a range of support is available for newly qualified teachers.

Pupils value the support that they receive from their teachers. Strong, mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils exist in many classrooms throughout the school.

Leaders are trying to improve the quality of teaching across the school in very challenging financial circumstances. This means that there is very little opportunity to recruit new staff. One consequence of this is that more pupils are being taught by non-specialists.

Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to be done to ensure that all teachers are able to assess pupils' progress accurately. Support has been provided to staff in relation to new specifications and examinations. However, leaders accept that not all staff have grasped the assessment implications of these changes.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils who attend Savio Salesian College are very well cared for. The welfare and safety of pupils are a high priority for leaders. A strong safeguarding culture exists throughout the school.

At the last inspection, safeguarding was judged to be ineffective because leaders did not follow up every absence in a timely manner. Immediately following that inspection, leaders introduced a very effective system for following up pupils' absence on a daily basis. A clear risk assessment procedure ensures that vulnerable pupils are the highest priority. Consistent record-keeping ensures that leaders are able to monitor the actions that are taken in relation to pupils' absences.

The work that staff have done to improve pupils' attendance has had some impact. The overall attendance figure increased from 2016 to 2017 and has continued to improve throughout this year. However, it still remains below the national average. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in particular. This has happened, but their attendance rate still remains below that of their peers in school and significantly below that of others nationally.

Staff have had particular success in reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school. There has been a significant reduction in the overall persistent absence figure since the last inspection and it is now much closer to the national average. While the number of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school has also decreased, leaders acknowledge that this figure remains far too high. They also accept that too many pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are regularly absent from school.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

Pupils' underachievement in mathematics remains a major concern. In the last two years, the progress made by pupils in mathematics has been in the bottom 10% of schools in the country. Despite the actions taken by leaders, such as running weekly intervention sessions during extended form time, the school's own information indicates that pupils in the current Years 11 and 10 are making even worse progress than in the previous two years. The work that leaders have done to improve the curriculum and teaching in key stage 3 is, however, having a positive impact on the progress that pupils are making in the lower years.

At the time of the last inspection, pupils' outcomes in English did not give cause for concern. However, in 2017, outcomes in this subject deteriorated considerably. The progress made by pupils in English was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. It is very worrying that, as in mathematics, the school's information indicates that pupils' progress in Years 11 and 10 has deteriorated even further.

The two groups in Year 11 who are making the worst progress are disadvantaged pupils and the most able. At the last inspection, leaders were judged not to have high enough expectations and aspirations, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. This situation has not improved. Leaders do not focus enough on the importance of pupils making good progress from their starting points. Their analysis of current pupils' attainment also focuses too much on grade 4 rather than grade 5 GCSE passes.

A scrutiny of books shows that not enough teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. This is the case from Year 7 through to Year 11. The standard of work in pupils' books across the school is variable.

## **External support**

Since the last inspection, the local authority has increased the amount of support that it provides to the school. For example, a local authority officer has spent a considerable amount of time developing leadership capacity in the English department. She has worked on developing systems in the department and improving teachers' assessment skills. However, at the time of this inspection, there was no evidence of any impact on pupils' progress.

The archdiocese has also provided support to the school. Its school improvement trust has provided staff training, for example, on new specifications and changes to the examination system. It has brokered support for mathematics from a local teaching school. However, this support has not had any impact on improving the progress that key stage 4 pupils are making in mathematics.