

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus
Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9163
Direct email: lewis.mackie1@serco.com



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Damien Keogh
Headteacher
St Peter and St Paul, Catholic Voluntary Academy
Western Avenue
Lincoln
LN6 7SX

Dear Mr Keogh

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter and St Paul, Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 3 July 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to ensure:

- marking consistently tells students how to improve their work, and teachers check that students have acted on this advice
- teachers always set tasks that closely match the ability of different groups.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and students. I had telephone conversations with the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chairperson of St Gilbert of Sempringham Catholic Academy Trust, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans and self-evaluation were reviewed. I visited lessons with you and conducted a work scrutiny of books with leaders. A range of documentation was evaluated including:

information on how teachers track students' achievement, attendance and behaviour, records of the monitoring of teaching and information about students' current progress.

Main findings

The academy Action Plan appropriately addresses the areas for improvement set out in the inspection report. Leaders have identified clear actions for improvement. They have identified appropriate criteria to measure success, based on the attainment and progress of students. The plan identifies the leaders who are responsible for ensuring that actions are completed and the specific milestones for when actions will be evaluated. These are not frequent enough to ensure the rapid improvement required.

You have taken swift action to revise the leadership of the academy. Lines of accountability are now clearer as a result. Performance management systems are sharper. Teaching staff are now more aware of the Teachers' Standards and the quality of teaching you expect. They have specific targets linked to pupil progress. There is now a quality assurance process in place. Leaders more regularly review the quality of teaching in the classroom, students' work in books and the progress that students are making.

Information about the attainment and progress of students is now more readily available to all leaders and classroom teachers. This on-line system provides a speedy way for underperformance to be identified. You and other senior leaders told me that subject leaders could now ensure that interventions took place immediately for those students who are falling behind. You will be monitoring this. Target setting within the academy remains an area of focus for you and your wider team. Pupils said that they were confused about their targets and what they meant. During our learning walk together we identified weaknesses in the way that targets are used within English and mathematics.

Your predictions for results in 2015 show that more students are on track to gain 5A*-C including English and mathematics and that more pupils will make the expected progress within both English and mathematics. You said that you have more confidence in the accuracy of assessment across the academy and that more external moderation had taken place to ensure this. You are encouraged by the progress that students are making in other year groups. Achievement data is suggesting a trend of improvement.

There remains much to be done to ensure that progress in mathematics improves strongly and that disadvantaged students achieve as well as their peers.

Scrutiny of student work shows that marking and feedback has improved since the inspection. Students said that they value the 'SST' feedback received from their teachers and that this helps them to learn. They also said that marking was now more regular in some, but not all subjects. The sample of English books seen, showed some good examples of how marking and feedback is helping students to move their learning on. However, the sample of marking seen in mathematics books confirmed that not all marking is equally effective. It also confirmed some low expectations of what students could achieve. In these books there was evidence of too much unfinished work and a lack of pride and care from students that had not been effectively challenged by teachers or leaders.

The capacity within the academy to improve teaching is building and the school has recently appointed lead practitioners to work alongside colleagues to develop their skills and share good practice. Underperformance is being addressed. However, greater urgency is required to ensure that all teaching is consistently good. You and I discussed the importance of ensuring that all leaders could accurately judge the quality of teaching over time. You said that you would broker external support to ensure this.

A review of governance has taken place and the Chair of Governors has been proactive in ensuring that the findings from this review are being acted upon. Members of the governing body are keen to ensure they have a sharper focus within committees and that they develop appropriate questions to ensure that leaders within the academy are held to account. Members of the governing body are keen to raise their profile with the parent community of the academy. Consideration is being given to a governor being appointed as a champion for pupil premium students.

External support

The academy is the sole secondary school within the St Gilbert of Sempringham Catholic Academy Trust. The Trust monitors the progress the school is making and you provide updates and reports to support this. You have made productive links with your most local Trust primary school. There is a need for the Trust to ensure they have an accurate view of the progress the school is making and that appropriate support is available to you, when required. The review of governance brokered for the school by the Trust has had a positive impact on improving the quality of questions asked of the headteacher.

Productive links remain with the local authority and you are part of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership. Links have been developed with Teaching Schools within Lincolnshire and Nottingham and a variety of training opportunities are planned for September 2015.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair person of St Gilbert of Sempringham Catholic Academy Trust.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk
- For academies CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk