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5 October 2011

Mrs J Meredith
Headteacher
St Anne's Roman Catholic High School, Stockport
Glenfield Road
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Dear Mrs Meredith

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of St Anne's Roman Catholic High School, Stockport**

Thank you for the help which you, your senior leaders and staff gave when Mrs Liptrot, additional inspector, and I inspected your school on Wednesday 5 October 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. I am also grateful to the Chair of the Governing Body, the representative of the local authority and the 16 students who spent time talking with the inspectors.

Since the inspection in July 2010 there has been a significant change in leadership. The headteacher had been in post just four weeks at the time of this monitoring inspection. In addition, there has been a reorganisation of leadership at both senior and middle levels.

As a result of the inspection in July 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement. I am of the opinion that the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is also satisfactory.

The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C (including English and mathematics) dipped sharply immediately after the July 2010 inspection. Only 42% of pupils attained this standard. This dip was more severe than the school expected. As a result, there was a strong focus on improving outcomes for students in Year 11. This focus paid dividends with the school attaining its best ever results in

September 2010



2011. Provisional figures indicate that 68% of students attained this standard. In the majority of subjects student performance improved, although it continues to lag behind in science. While the headline five A* to C figure improved significantly, the figure for those attaining the highest A* to A grades was broadly similar to 2010.

To improve the proportion of students attaining at least grade C or its equivalent, leaders in science have introduced new courses to engage students more fully in their learning. While such revisions were introduced relatively recently, they are already having a positive impact on the attainment of students. Leaders are working hard to ensure there is greater stability in staffing in this subject area and understand what further improvements are needed, including improving laboratory space and the quality of resources.

Providing challenge for more-able students remains a key area for development. Work set in lessons is not always planned to meet students' different needs precisely enough, with too much aimed at the middle ability, leaving more-able students waiting until others have finished. In the best lessons seen, good quality, probing questioning by teachers, and involving students in assessing their own and others responses engaged students of different abilities well and improved their learning and progress. Teachers in such lessons knew their students well and provided stimulating activities based on their needs. As a result of such features, students in a Year 11 English lesson, a Year 7 history lesson and a Year 10 science lesson were able to, respectively, create sensitive stage directions to accompany the first meeting between Romeo and Juliet, explain reasons why the Roman Empire was able to grow so large, and articulate clearly how changes may be made to the rate of a chemical reaction.

The same sense of urgency that gripped the school following the dip in standards in 2010 is continuing, and is supported well by the local authority. The reorganisation of leadership results from a recognition that a focus on Year 11 alone is not sustainable. Clear lines of accountability are now in place. Middle and senior leaders have an improved grasp of student performance data. They are jointly responsible for assessing the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. They are coming to shared and increasingly accurate views about the effectiveness of provision and what needs to be done to improve it. For example, they have rightly identified the need for teachers to make explicit in their planning what different groups of students are to learn, and to improve the quality and consistency of marking.

Leaders have also brought about improvements in the way behaviour is managed which has led to fewer lessons being disrupted. Students are positive about the improvements in behaviour in and out of lessons. They appreciate the clarity of the school's behaviour policy. They report that there is a greater consistency in how teachers manage behaviour, particularly in terms of what is expected of them, although they add that it is not completely consistent across the school. Evidence gained from this monitoring inspection confirms this picture. The behaviour of students around school at break and lunchtime, and between lessons is improving.

There is, however, variability. In lessons where students are engaged in meaningful discussion and activity with clear expectations, behaviour is better. In some lessons, though, high expectations of behaviour are not reinforced so that, for example, students tap their pens and have quiet conversations with neighbours while the teacher is speaking or another student is responding. The result is that they miss out on some learning. The requirement of the correct school uniform and smartness of appearance is appreciated by students who spoke with inspectors. Where standards of dress fall below those expected, adults intervene appropriately.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2010

- Raise attainment and improve students' progress, particularly for the most able and in science.

- Improve teaching and learning through:
 - improving the quality and consistency of marking so that students know how to improve
 - ensuring the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy
 - ensuring that middle leaders monitor rigorously the quality of teaching and assessment and students' progress in their subject areas.