

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566862
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
rcowley@cfbt.com



16 January 2013

Mr Tony Bishop
Headteacher
Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School in Humanities
Wath Wood Road
Wath-upon-Dearne
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 7PQ

Dear Mr Bishop

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School in Humanities

Following my visit to your school on 14 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and the consultant headteacher. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. The inspector made a series of brief lesson visits with the headteacher. The school's written feedback to teachers following lesson observations and teacher appraisals were also evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection a new Chair and two Vice Chairs of the Governing Body have been appointed. Teaching in mathematics has been strengthened by a new appointment.

Main findings

The school has rightly focused its priorities on improving teaching. In particular senior leaders have led staff in improving the way they use information about students' progress to plan lessons. This is helping teachers to think carefully about students' individual needs. Teachers have had training to support them in asking the right kinds of questions to make sure students have to think hard and are suitably challenged. Some teachers are also getting better at planning tasks which are active and help students learn for themselves and solve problems but not everybody has adopted this approach.

Middle leaders are developing a better understanding of how to check on the quality of teaching and learning and use this information to improve students' progress. Middle leaders are also getting better at giving teachers feedback about their teaching but they do not observe enough lessons to ensure that their observation skills develop quickly enough. The headteacher regularly visits lessons with other senior leaders and heads of subjects. This time is now being focused on areas, such as mathematics where students' progress requires most improvement. Leaders also check how well teachers are using recent training to improve their practice but this is not happening quickly enough to measure how much impact this is having on teachers' classroom performance.

The school's improvement plan addresses the most important areas requiring improvement from the last inspection. It is not clear enough about how and when actions will be monitored. This means that the rate of improvement expected by senior leaders is not clear to teachers. For example, improvements to students' reading, writing and speaking skills are included in the school's plans but how and when progress in these areas will be checked is not explicit.

Members of the governing body have quickly undertaken an audit of the skills and expertise they have available. They have sound plans to change the way they are working to make sure they have plenty of first-hand knowledge about the work of the school. The governing body has engaged well with the support offered by a National Leader in Education.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- make sure the school's action plan and improvement plan are clear about the timings of actions and how improvements will be monitored
- make sure the impact of teachers' professional development on classroom performance is monitored swiftly and regularly.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority is providing the school with effective support. The school has particularly valued the help in securing the support for the governing body and the extra training teachers have had in improving their skills. The authority plays an active role in supporting the school in extending its partnership working with other providers.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham and as below.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.