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30 September 2013

Mr Peter Coady
Headteacher
Trinity Catholic College
Saltersgill Avenue
Middlesbrough
TS4 3JW

Dear Mr Coady

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Trinity Catholic College

Following my visit to your school on 26 and 27 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged as having serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in January 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Diocese of Middlesbrough, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Middlesbrough.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Richardson
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2013

- Improve the quality of all teaching to at least good so that all students, including those in the sixth form, the more-able and those supported at school action, achieve better outcomes by:
 - capturing and sharing the best teaching methods so that all students benefit from good teaching
 - ensuring that marking policies and procedures in all subjects match those in the high performing subjects and are implemented by all staff
 - improving teachers' marking and feedback to students so that they have clear targets for improvement and regular opportunities to act upon advice
 - requiring teachers to make use of up-to-date information about students' learning when they are planning lessons
 - developing teachers' skills in assessing, through close observation and questioning, how well students are progressing in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers keep explanations brief and to the point so that students have plenty of time for learning through activities.

- Urgently raise students' achievement in mathematics by:
 - eradicating all inadequate teaching in the subject
 - quickly raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers regularly mark students' work and give prompt advice on how to improve, in line with the policies in the most successful departments
 - holding teachers more closely to account for the progress made by their students in mathematics by setting clear performance targets for teachers, rigorously checking progress towards achieving them and taking prompt action if they are not met.

- Raise the attendance of the small minority of students who are persistently absent, and whose achievement suffers as a result.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing training and support to enable the leaders of mathematics to monitor effectively the work of the department, hold colleagues to account and support them to improve outcomes for students
 - ensuring that the good practice in checking and assessing in the most successful departments is shared with all subject leaders, so that there is greater consistency and accuracy in the school's evaluations
 - setting clear and measurable performance targets for all teaching staff to ensure that they meet the Teachers' Standards
 - developing governors' knowledge of the school's performance, so that they are better able to hold the school to account for students' progress and teachers' performance.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 09 and 27 September 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher and two members of the senior leadership on two occasions and held one further meeting with two members of the senior leadership. He also held meetings with three groups of students, a group of three teachers, two individual teachers, two members of the governing body and three members of the resident inspection team, which includes a local authority representative and was created to support and challenge the post-Ofsted improvements. During the inspection the inspector and members of the senior leadership observed five lessons jointly. In addition two learning progress walks were undertaken to evaluate the quality of the learning and behaviour of students. This second monitoring inspection focused on the quality of teaching, the achievement of students, especially in mathematics, changes in attendance of the students who are persistently absent and improvements in leadership and management, particularly of the middle leaders.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection there have been some changes in the line management of curriculum areas and new appointments made to roles concerned with developing teaching and learning. There have been no other significant changes in staffing.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

During the monitoring inspection joint observations with members of the senior leadership showed high levels of agreement between the inspector and school leaders about the quality of teaching. This agreement demonstrated the reliability of the data gathered through the school's own regular lesson observations. At the time of the section 5 inspection the proportion of lessons judged to be good or better was around 60 % but current data show this has risen to 78 %. In the case of mathematics lessons the proportion has risen to 74 % narrowing the gap in quality of teaching identified at the time of the section 5 inspection. Interviews with students clearly demonstrated their view that teaching has improved over the previous two terms. Actions taken by the leadership have led to these improvements. Reports from visits by local authority officers and members of the resident inspection team corroborate these improvements.

Interviews and discussions with members of staff demonstrate their high regard for the quality of leadership and management of the school. Those interviewed clearly articulated the priorities of the leadership to bring about improvements in the school and the good support they receive in carrying out their work. They noted in particular the much closer monitoring of performance, greater frequency and rigour of lesson observations and the high quality of individualised professional development.

The support offered by the governing body has been developed through an audit of the skills of a number of the governing body but this process is not yet complete for all governors. Some training has been provided but these opportunities have not been taken up by all governors. A very recent appointment to the governing body and those appointments to take place this term provide the opportunity to develop and focus skills and efforts of the governing body on key areas for development. It is clear, however, that there has been an

increase in visits of governors to their associated curriculum areas. Teachers commented on this, describing it as a useful change.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The professional development programme is personalised and addresses the assessed needs of individual teachers. There is broad focus for all staff on improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.
- The professional development is well-planned and involves all members of staff. Professional development is embedded in the performance management processes and a range of provision is made including training on 'moving from good to outstanding' and the creation of coaching trios to promote the sharing of good practice. These trios are composed of one teacher trained in coaching and two teachers who have had specific training needs identified.
- New appointments in the school have been made to tackle issues with middle leadership and to focus on improved teaching and learning. Evidence from interviews shows that staff are clear about their contribution to improvement.
- The introduction of 'the green pen challenge', an innovation to improve marking and ensure that students respond to teachers' comments, has been successful. Work scrutiny across the whole school has clearly demonstrated improvement. Students interviewed said how much they felt this had helped them to improve.
- More frequent and more rigorous monitoring of students' performance and of the quality of teaching through lesson observations has had a positive impact, such that over three quarters of lessons seen are now judged to be good or better.
- In addition to more frequent and rigorous lesson observations, members of the school leadership and curriculum team leaders carry out progress walks to evaluate teaching and learning using a detailed evaluation schedule. The data gathered on these walks are analysed and used to track improvements and identify areas for further improvement.
- Staff are being encouraged to be self-evaluating and self-improving. This is done through professional development sessions, the creation of groups to consider such matters and the provision of a camera system for teachers to use to capture and evaluate their own teaching.
- Senior leadership has made strenuous efforts to improve the attendance of those students who are persistently absent. This has been done in a co-ordinated way with relevant agencies. There is a trend in reduction of absences with 40 fewer students who are persistently absent now classed as having persistent absences since the section 5 inspection.
- The strategies to bring about improvement are well co-ordinated and well communicated to teachers, students and parents. Staff interviewed clearly support this view and demonstrate understanding of their role in bringing about improvement.
- Planning for improvement is frequently reviewed in the light of monitoring data and appropriate changes made to support continued improvement.

External support

The local authority has supported the school well in the process of bringing about improvement. A secondment of senior staff to the school and the participation of local authority staff in the resident inspection team are making a significant contribution to

improvements in the school. This team draws also on the senior leadership of a high performing local school and the diocese.