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Mr B McNally
Headteacher
All Saints Roman Catholic High School, Rossendale
Haslingden Road
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Lancashire
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Dear Mr McNally

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to All Saints Roman Catholic High School, Rossendale, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 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 2013. 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 school should take further action to:

- ensure that students present their work neatly and complete unfinished work so that it provides a complete record of their learning
- improve the consistency of teachers' feedback to students
- refine the presentation of students' achievement data so that it enables teachers to readily see where there is under-performance.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and the governor overseeing curriculum matters, a representative of Lancashire Local Authority and a representative of Salford Diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I had informal discussions with several students, made brief visits to a range of lessons with you and joined a meeting with yourself and staff representatives to consider the achievement of students in Year 10. I also scrutinised a selection of students' exercise books and looked at examples of their work displayed in classrooms. I considered the school improvement plan and your analysis of the impact of actions you have taken since your appointment as headteacher in April 2013.

Context

Three teachers have left the school since the most recent Section 5 inspection. The appointment of an assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning has been made permanent. An assistant headteacher has been appointed to ensure the quality of provision for students with special educational needs.

Main findings

The school's recent section 5 inspection made reference to the prompt action you have taken since your appointment to improve teaching and learning. Your drive remains strong and inspires your leadership team. Your accurate evaluation of teaching underpins your strategy for raising standards.

The school improvement plan is well-focused and progress in achieving key priorities is regularly checked, recorded and shared in full with staff. You have introduced a 'flight path' that epitomises your ambition for students' achievement by insisting that all members of the school community strive to ensure that students make exceptionally good progress. Teachers' assessments of students' work are undertaken more thoroughly and regularly now and there is increased confidence that these assessments are accurate. Leaders plot students' progress and intervene rapidly if there is any hint of under-achievement. The recording of students' progress is undertaken systematically but you acknowledge that the overview is not as comprehensively presented as it might be.

At the Year 10 achievement monitoring meeting I observed, you demonstrated how well you and other leaders know individual students and how adept you are at promptly supporting and challenging them if they appear not to be making sufficient progress. The school's interventions include the personalised use of pupil premium funding to respond to students' specific individual circumstances.

Teachers are beginning to make more thorough use of progress data in planning for lessons. You are piloting ways of supporting teachers and students in accelerating progress, for instance by using literacy stickers in English and humanities that give

targets to groups of students in response to teachers' analysis of their work. This development is at an early stage but indicates teachers' willingness to embrace new strategies.

The school's records of teaching, moderated by the local authority, indicate that teaching is improving. This is because of more consistent guidance to teachers on leaders' expectations. The work of the Teaching and Learning Community, led by your deputy headteacher, continues to be a valuable forum for discussing and sharing practice. Bespoke support is being provided to individual teachers through a well-targeted coaching programme that is both supportive and strongly focused on securing demonstrable improvement in students' learning. A second coaching programme is being developed by an assistant headteacher with the intention of securing a higher proportion of outstanding teaching.

The leadership of teaching is ambitious and linked to the school's mission: *Lucent Lux Vestra* (let your light shine). There is a determination for teachers and students to experience 'joy' in learning. Teachers are working hard to enliven lessons and support students' independence. During our brief visits to lessons we observed many examples of students working co-operatively to solve problems and present their opinions. In humanities subjects, some students have enjoyed creating models to illustrate their learning and these are proudly displayed. There is much less evidence of students' written work displayed around the school and so opportunities are missed to present them with guidance and exemplification or to celebrate their learning.

Part of your drive to raise expectations has been to improve the consistency of teachers' guidance through marking. There are good examples of teachers providing students with a full analysis of 'what works well' and providing next steps through 'even better if' statements. Students are expected to address their teachers' observations but are not always clear how to do this. Although the school has prioritised improvement in literacy skills as a key to raising achievement, there are too many books where students have not paid sufficient attention to good presentation and have not attended to corrections in spelling, punctuation and grammar sufficiently well. The school's marking policy is not consistently used by all teachers.

Senior leaders are working with subject leaders, several of whom are in their first year in post, to ensure the robustness of their judgements of teaching. You are aware of the varied confidence and experience of subject leaders and are providing support accordingly.

Governors continue to hold the school to account, particularly through the Standards and Effectiveness Committee which maintains a critical focus on leaders' progress in addressing the key areas for improvement identified at the recent section 5

inspection. Individual governors work with specific members of the leadership team to oversee these priorities.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority identified that the school needed additional support prior to its section 5 inspection and helped to build capacity at a time of transition in leadership. The leadership team is now stable. There is a clear contract for support from the local authority's Monitoring and Intervention Team. This includes support for school leaders in moderating self-evaluation, along with support for the relatively new leaders in English, mathematics and science. Support is also being provided to ensure that students make good progress in modern foreign languages. The support provided by the local authority is proportionate to the school's needs, fully negotiated with the headteacher, and defined by clear success criteria.

Salford diocese has supported the school by making a link with another Catholic school to aid the development of All Saints' outstanding teaching programme. A mentor from a good local school has been agreed by the diocese and local authority to support the headteacher in his first years in office. Links with other good schools have been brokered by the local authority and are specifically focused on the school's needs, including subject leadership and development. Effective co-operation between the local authority and diocese ensures that support is complementary. The local authority and diocese have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas of development and have shared these with the governors and headteacher.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire and The Director of Education for Salford Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall

Her Majesty's Inspector