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4 February 2014

Mr Mike Madden
Headteacher
Chatsmore Catholic High School
Goring Street
Worthing
BN12 5AF

Dear Mr Madden

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chatsmore Catholic High School

Following my visit to your school on 4 February 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The first monitoring inspection took place in April 2013. Her Majesty's Inspector also conducted an advisory visit in October 2013.

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 remaining weaknesses in teaching are swiftly tackled and that examples of good and better teaching are shared across the school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, governors and representatives from the local authority. The school's records of monitoring teaching, analyses of information about students' progress and improvement plans were evaluated. I met a group of students taken from all year groups and observed

teaching in eight lessons, including English, mathematics, science, modern languages and geography. I made some short visits to other lessons. All observations of teaching were conducted jointly with senior leaders. I also evaluated marking and progress in a selection of students' books.

Context

Since the first monitoring visit there have been several staff changes, notably in English, mathematics and science. There has also been some restructuring of the senior leadership team. The Chair of Governors resigned in January 2014.

Main findings

Since the first monitoring inspection and the advisory visit, leadership in the school has been strengthened. Senior leaders are demonstrating greater determination to improve and their evaluation of the school's current performance is more realistic. The headteacher and senior team have fully accepted that the school needs to improve and there is a more intensive focus on the key weaknesses identified at the section 5 inspection. This is a major and significant step forward.

Senior leaders are now monitoring teaching frequently. Any teaching observed that is less than good is followed up rigorously. Teachers are set performance management targets that link to their own areas for improvement and the school action plan. However teaching is not improving sufficiently consistently and rapidly because teachers do not have enough opportunities to learn from each other and share examples of strong teaching.

Teachers use information about students' prior attainment more carefully when planning lessons, although not all students are challenged at the right level. Teachers do not always make clear exactly what they want students to have learned or practised by the end of a lesson. In these cases, students make slow progress because they are not motivated by a definite goal.

In some lessons observed during the monitoring inspection, students did not have enough time to show what they were capable of because too much time was spent on tasks that were too easy and the teacher did not move them on quickly enough. In better lessons, students were set challenging targets, knew how to reach them and the teacher planned carefully how students would be stretched. In these lessons, students worked purposefully, were self-reliant and made rapid progress.

Systems used to track students' progress are much improved. Senior leaders regularly analyse students' progress and are able to interpret their results more precisely. Senior leaders have ensured that assessments of students' attainment and

progress are accurate, although some students' targets are still not sufficiently ambitious or aspirational.

Unvalidated GCSE results for 2013 show that students' overall achievement has improved, as predicted by school leaders. However, there are still areas where progress and attainment are weaker than they should be, including English language and geography. This was also the case at the time of the section 5 inspection. Senior leaders have also rightly identified that disabled students, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium need to make better progress to catch up with their peers.

Marking has improved. During the advisory visit in October some books were seen that had not been marked at all. This is no longer the case. During this monitoring inspection books were marked and most had helpful comments. Students appreciate the improved approach and welcome their teachers' comments and guidance. However, more needs to be done to ensure that teachers' written feedback provides students with opportunities to respond and improve their work. The school's monitoring of teaching shows that there is an increased focus on literacy and numeracy skills in lesson planning across the curriculum, although this has not yet demonstrated enough impact on students' results, particularly in English.

Governors now set high standards for the school. Since the first monitoring inspection they have sensibly restructured their work in line with the school improvement plan. They ensure that governors' meetings focus closely on the quality of teaching and students' progress. They have made a point of acquiring a better understanding of the way that students' progress is measured in order to challenge school leaders with more astute questions.

HMI will carry out a further monitoring inspection in the summer term of 2014 and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Since the first monitoring inspection the school has benefited from increased support from the local authority. A seconded assistant headteacher has continued to provide useful expertise in recording and evaluating students' progress data. The school has been supported with standardising and validating school assessments. The local authority has commissioned extra advisory support for special educational needs and modern languages. Additional resources have been supplied to help the school run extra classes in English and mathematics. The school improvement advisor has conducted monitoring visits and provided useful feedback on teaching and leadership. The school also draws on close partnerships with good and outstanding schools.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce

Her Majesty's Inspector