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Mrs M Kelly
Headteacher
Cardinal Newman Catholic School A Specialist Arts and Community College
Sandpits Lane
Keresley
Coventry
CV6 2FR

Dear Mrs Kelly

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cardinal Newman Catholic School A Specialist Arts and Community College

Following my visit to your school on 6 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 month and year. 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 all teachers:

- meet the learning needs of the most able students through appropriate learning activities that provide challenge and broaden their knowledge and understanding
- use effective marking and feedback, as seen in the majority of lessons, which improves students' knowledge, understanding and progress and quickly corrects any misunderstandings or mistakes
- provide specific areas for improvement and feedback for disabled students and those who have special educational needs that will help them improve their work.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, other school leaders and the Chair and three members of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. You showed me around the school and visits were made to lessons in Year 7 religious education and mathematics, Year 8 and Year 10 science and Year 9 mathematics. During these visits I looked at the work in students' books and spoke to them about their learning. Meetings were held with the subject leaders of English, mathematics, science, the head of sixth form and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). I also met with students from Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. I evaluated the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's information about students' progress and attainment and the headteacher's report to governors. I met with a representative of the local authority and had a telephone discussion with an education consultant who provides support to the school leaders.

Context

Since the inspection in March, one member of staff has left the school. There have been no other significant changes.

Main findings

The headteacher, school leaders and the governing body, with the support of the local authority, acted quickly to address the issues for improvement identified in the recent inspection. School leaders have prioritised improving the quality of teaching and taken effective and appropriate action to increase the rate of students' progress.

Information provided by the school shows that the number of good and outstanding lessons has increased since the inspection in March. As a consequence, the progress and attainment of the majority of students is improving in a range of subjects. Students say that teachers are better at meeting their individual needs. However, school leaders recognise that the most able students do not always have their learning needs met.

The school assessment policy has been revised and as a result teachers are better at letting students know precisely what they are going to learn and what they need to do to improve their work. Students say that this is helping them make progress. However, as a result of the work scrutiny and in discussions with students it is apparent that the quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent across subjects and individual teachers.

Provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is improving. The SENCO has produced documents for teachers outlining the support that should be provided for this group of students. However, this information is non-specific and does not help teachers to plan, monitor and evaluate work that is

particularly focused on improving students' knowledge and understanding in an individual subject.

School leaders are tackling effectively the underperformance of students in Year 12. This is being achieved through the introduction of 'non-negotiables' that reflect the improving practice seen in teaching throughout the school. Information provided by the school shows that students' progress across a range of subjects, especially in English, physics, product design, applied ICT and drama has improved.

School leaders have introduced a revised behaviour for learning policy. Students say that this has improved students' behaviour in and out of the classroom and this has helped their learning in the majority of subjects. Information provided by the school shows that the number of incidents of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour has decreased. The number of praise awards has increased.

Actions in the new improvement plan are clear and appropriate. They address the areas requiring improvement pinpointed by the most recent inspection. Lines of accountability are clear as are the dates and timelines for implementing and reviewing the actions. There are clear indicators against which students' progress and attainment can be measured.

Governors meet regularly to discuss the progress the school is making and continue to have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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

School leaders are working successfully with external consultants, including the Castle Phoenix Teaching School Alliance, who provide advice and guidance for school improvement, inclusion and the development of senior and subject leaders.

The local authority provides appropriate support for the school. They do this through School Improvement Board meetings and school review days.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Coventry, the Education Funding Agency and the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries
Her Majesty's Inspector