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28 September 2014

Mr Paul Kassapian
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Kassapian

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Salvatorian Roman Catholic College

Following my visit to your academy on 26 September 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 October 2012. 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 academy should take further action to:

- strengthen further the school development plan by including more frequent milestones and targets to measure students' progress
- enable all governors to scrutinise achievement data and ask searching questions about how quickly the gaps are closing for specific groups, such as students with special educational needs.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, a group of senior leaders, members of the Governing Body, the Director of Education from the Archdiocese of Westminster and the Head of the Harrow School Improvement

Team. The school development plan and your self-evaluation document were evaluated. I reviewed your monitoring of teaching, policy documents and data about students' achievement. I visited lessons with you and one of your assistant headteachers and we toured the school to look at the school environment and talk to the boys.

Context

Since the previous section 5 inspection you have appointed four new assistant headteachers and a new deputy headteacher joined the academy in January 2013. In September 2014, two new assistant headteachers joined the academy on secondment for a year from local Catholic schools. You have restructured the curriculum into five faculties and appointed a new head of humanities, mathematics and religious education. In September, 18 new staff joined the academy and you have recently appointed a new Chair of the Governing Body.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors are working tirelessly to improve the school and are steadily succeeding. Leaders accept that there has been much to do and some stubborn issues to remedy, while managing staffing changes at the same time. Leaders have tackled robustly issues with students' attitudes to learning, behaviour in lessons and around the school. The culture and ethos of the school is much improved. The rebranding of the school through eight core principles in the motto 'IAM SALVO' (*Inspire, Achieve, Motivate, Success, Ambition, Leadership, Vision Opportunity*) is raising aspirations and expectations of students and staff.

The school environment is clean, tidy, free from graffiti and well looked after. This shows how receptive students are to taking more pride in themselves and their school. Leaders and teachers remind students to smarten their ties and tuck their shirts in, which they do quickly. Most students are now dressed smartly and are following school rules.

Relationships between students and with staff are courteous. During our tour of the school, we saw students working well with each other and with staff. High staff presence moves students quickly to lessons. Most students are punctual. Your deputy head boy spoke clearly about how much the behaviour and attitudes of the boys have changed. He confirmed that students are abiding by the behaviour policy and most are more ready to learn.

There are more robust systems in place to check how well students are progressing and how well gaps in the boys' achievement are closing. Information is more accurate and the unvalidated results for 2014 show a rise to 63% attaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. However, students are not doing as well as they could in some subjects, such as geography, German and design

technology. To tackle this variation your leaders are insisting that schemes of work, planning and teaching quickly improve and provide greater challenge for specific groups of students, such as the most able boys.

The tighter scrutiny of data is giving leaders a more precise picture about the progress of different groups of boys and where gaps remain. Your unvalidated data for Year 11 in 2014 show that progress in English is improving strongly, but boys' progress in mathematics is still lingering behind that of English. Your newly appointed head of mathematics is providing greater challenge to the mathematics team to improve their planning and teaching. Leaders are ensuring boy's mathematical understanding does not exist in a vacuum and that students learn how to use mathematical knowledge in other subjects.

The progress of students supported through pupil premium funding is improving. There is greater accountability for your learning support assistants to improve their practice by working closely with teachers to plan good learning for these students. Teaching teams are becoming more confident with teasing out where gaps remain in the progress data and how their planning must close the gaps in achievement.

In several subjects, many changes in staffing have affected the continuity and quality of teaching. Staffing is more settled this term and the combination of professional training sessions, external support and personalised coaching for teachers is now securing better teaching. The best practice in marking and feedback is shared across different departments. In English, I saw some good marking where feedback challenged students to evaluate their ideas and deepen their subject knowledge. There are however, books where marking remains cursory and is not developing students' knowledge and understanding. Some boys are developing good scholarly and professional attitudes to their learning. They are keen to spend time improving their work, completing their homework to a good standard and responding to teacher's feedback. A few others are not. Their work is scrappy and on occasion incomplete. During this monitoring inspection, we agreed that this term must be the time to eradicate any inconsistencies, consolidate, and further improve the good practice at the academy.

Your self-evaluation document is accurate and incisive. Leaders and governors know where issues remain in teaching. You are judging the school with careful consideration of criteria in Ofsted's *School inspection handbook*. The school development plan is detailed and rightly places improving teaching at its core. The five key priorities, staff responsibilities and outcomes link clearly to the accurate assessment of where the school is at currently. However, there are too few milestones in the plan to check regularly how quickly things are improving. Some of the success criteria are not specific enough to test to what extent gaps in students' achievement are closing for particular groups.

In response to findings from the external review of governance and additional training for governors in using performance data, most governors are beginning to ask questions that are more incisive about student's achievement. They are checking published data and the school's internal progress day as well as meeting with leaders to question robustly the quality of teaching in each faculty. Not all governors are fully up to speed with the exact requirements for leadership and governance to be good. Further training in using performance data to test if all students are making good progress is a priority.

Governors are visiting the school regularly to see for themselves if students' behaviour is improving and watch students' engagement in lessons. The new committee structure is helping governors focus upon the priorities in the development plan more closely. It is also helping them make certain that minutes of meetings capture debates with leaders and not just the meetings' actions. Governors have provided good support to leaders during a significant period of staff changes.

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 archdiocese and local authority have an accurate view of the very positive improvements at Salvatorian and the areas still needing further work. The support from the archdiocese is helping leaders and governors improve their practice. Leaders have been very receptive to support from a range of local schools. This is helping improve teaching and developing leadership capacity. The monitoring by the local authority officer provides good challenge. Leaders have worked well as a team to respond to feedback and external scrutiny.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Harrow, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster, the Education Funding Agency and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector