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18 June 2015

Mr P. Grainger  
Headteacher  
The All Saints Church of England Academy  
Pennycross  
Plymouth  
PL5 3NE

Dear Mr Grainger

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The All Saints Church of England Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 16 June 2015, 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 academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection in 2013 the academy was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- improve students' literacy skills by:
  - extending their vocabulary and their verbal and written responses in all lessons
  - providing good models of writing across subjects
  - giving students strategies to improve their spelling and handwriting
  
- develop middle leaders' skills in ensuring that teachers consistently:
  - assess students' progress during lessons and adapt the work to their differing needs
  - provide feedback that helps students to know what to do to improve their work to the next level or grade.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, groups of students, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan and post-Ofsted action plan were evaluated. The academy's self-evaluation statement and its monitoring of students' progress, attendance and behaviour, and the performance management of teachers, were also examined. Six part-lessons were observed jointly by the inspector and senior leaders. Students' books were looked at during the lesson observations.

## **Context**

The academy, which is sponsored by the Diocese of Exeter, the University College of St Mark and St John in Plymouth, and Plymouth City Council, moved into its new building in July 2014. It provides for students aged 11 to 19 years who have a diverse range of needs. The proportion of disadvantaged students is significantly higher than the national average. Since the recent section 5 inspection, the senior leadership team has been restructured to increase its focus on improving students' achievement.

## **Main findings**

Governors have a clear understanding of their role in holding senior leaders to account for the standards that students reach. They have set clear expectations for senior and middle leaders to provide accurate and transparent evaluation of the academy's performance. In order to gain an objective view, governors are linking to departments in their visits to the academy. In this way, they are gaining a more in-depth knowledge of students' achievement across subjects.

The principal and senior leaders have established a safe and orderly environment, and a positive ethos for learning. They have also established well thought out policies and procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the academy's work. Relevant priorities and ambitious targets are outlined in the academy improvement plan, including working with parents to ensure that students attend more regularly. Suitable action is being taken to address the weaker performance in subjects such as humanities and technology.

Senior leaders are setting higher expectations for the rate of students' progress. Their monitoring of information on students' progress by subject, year and student groups is detailed and is leading to appropriate intervention for some individuals and groups. For example, additional literacy support in Years 7 and 8 is improving achievement for these students.

Senior and middle leaders, however, are not evaluating rigorously enough the impact of teaching over time on students' achievement to identify what needs to be done to improve it. This has resulted in students' progress being too slow, especially in English and mathematics and for disadvantaged pupils. Senior leaders have identified literacy as a barrier to students' progress. It is included in the academy's improvement plan and the monitoring of lessons and students' books, but the actions teachers are taking in lessons are not tackling the issue head on.

Students are eager to learn, but many find subjects such as humanities difficult because they do not have the vocabulary or ability to express their thinking beyond simple sentences. Not all teachers challenge them to extend their spoken and written responses, or give them good examples of writing. Apart from those in Years 7 and 8, students are not developing strategies to help them to improve their spelling and handwriting.

Teachers' use of assessment and their marking of students' work are improving, although not consistently. Effective use of assessment over time was evident in the good progress being made by Year 7 students in a mathematics lesson. The teacher had tested the students' understanding of new areas of work and checked again after several lessons. She used the information to address any gaps or misunderstanding in the students' learning. The students responded well to the precise feedback she gave in the marking of their work. As a result, all the students made good progress from their different starting points.

Subject leaders are not ensuring that all teachers use assessment and feedback effectively to promote students' good progress. Most teachers plan work at appropriate levels of challenge to meet the students' differing needs. They are not all checking progress during the lesson or adapting the lesson to speed up the rate of progress for all students.

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

### **External support**

Senior leaders are drawing appropriately on external support to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, consultants from Edison Learning are improving the monitoring and evaluation skills of senior leaders. To speed up the rate of students' progress, it is recommended that the monitoring and evaluation skills of subject and other middle leaders are also developed and that the middle leaders see outstanding practice in other schools to extend their knowledge of teaching and learning strategies.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Plymouth and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]