

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



10 March 2016

Kevin Hogan
Headteacher
St Matthew's RC High School
Nuthurst Road
Moston
Manchester
M40 0EW

Dear Mr Hogan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Matthew's RC High School

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2016, 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 September 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- review the action plan
- tackle weaknesses in the leadership and management of mathematics and teaching and learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I made a series of short visits to lessons alongside your senior leaders. I scrutinised documentation around quality assurance, attendance, reports from your school improvement partner and pupils' work in books.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staffing since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

You, your governors and senior leadership team have set up 'rapid improvement groups' to report back to a 'rapid improvement board'. You are collecting information around pupils' progress more regularly and have re-launched your expectations about the high standards you expect in classrooms. The purpose of this work is to rapidly raise standards but it is having little impact. This is because senior leaders are not checking the day-to-day quality of work in books, marking and assessment closely enough.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning is a key weakness. You currently have no accurate picture of the overall quality of teaching in the school so you cannot deploy support for weaker teaching appropriately. Furthermore, you are wasting opportunities to robustly challenge teaching that is consistently below the quality you expect.

Governors are rightly asking for detailed information about pupils' achievements and appropriately challenging senior leaders. However, you and governors were unaware of how poor standards are in mathematics despite putting a system in place to monitor them.

Standards in mathematics remain low. The mathematics books I scrutinised with you and some of your senior leaders show that, on the occasions that they are marked, they leave pupils without an accurate assessment of what they have done correctly and what they still need to work on. Many of the books we looked at were poorly presented and did not adhere to the mathematics department's marking policy. There is insufficient guidance and resources for mathematics teachers to teach pupils of different abilities effectively.

Your 'post-Ofsted action plan' requires review to make it clearer what impact you expect to see from improvement work and what progress you would consider to be good enough.

You do not use the examples of best practice in school to good effect. For example, there is a gulf between the impact of long-term planning in modern foreign languages on pupils' outcomes and that in mathematics. Teachers of English used their knowledge of pupils' abilities to plan appropriate work. English books reflect teachers' high expectations and are well-presented.

You have had some success in improving pupils' attendance due to the well-focused efforts of some senior leaders. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those who are disadvantaged is improving.

External support

The local authority has commissioned a national leader of education to work with senior leaders. A package of support has been put in place to improve mathematics and leadership. Further support is being provided to the mathematics department by another local school. Despite this support, there has been little improvement in mathematics and senior leaders cannot say whether teaching has improved as there is no overview of its quality.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Salford, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector