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Mr Damien Keogh
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Dear Damien Keogh

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter and St Paul, Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 21 March 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the use of achievement information about disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs or disability so that their progress accelerates
- make sure that the new subject leaders in mathematics and science have effective mentoring and support so that they can drive the improvement that is required.

Evidence

During the inspection I met with you, the chair of the governing body and a governor who chairs the standards committee. I spoke with senior leaders and a

group of subject leaders. Together we observed learning within a selection of lessons and looked at the work in pupils' books. The school self-evaluation and action plan was evaluated. We discussed the most recent information on pupils' achievement and discussed predicted GCSE outcomes for 2016.

Context

Since the November monitoring visit, a mathematics subject leader has been appointed. You have also been successful in recruiting a lead teacher in mathematics and a new subject leader of science.

Main findings

There has been rapid improvement since the monitoring inspection conducted in November 2015. The school action plan is now fit for purpose. Planning is regularly reviewed by leaders and governors to make sure that planned actions are having the required impact. Leaders, including governors, now have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas of weakness.

The information about the progress that pupils are making is now much clearer and is better understood by leaders, teachers, pupils and parents. Systems are quicker and more responsive. This means that after each assessment point, meaningful intervention can be put in place for those pupils who are falling behind. Teachers have checked the accuracy of their assessments with others, both within and outside the school, and subject leaders have worked in close partnership with a local teaching school in order to improve the reliability of assessment. GCSE predictions for 2016 are cautious. You are keenly aware of the importance of ensuring that assessment is accurate. High expectations of what pupils can achieve must not be reduced because of this cautious approach.

There is a great deal of information about the progress that is made by disadvantaged pupils, those pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The analysis of this information is not yet good enough. Leaders and governors require a comprehensive overview of the achievement of these groups of pupils for all year groups. The tracking of the gaps in achievement between these pupils and others in the school and nationally needs to be done more effectively. Leaders must assess the effectiveness of the interventions to close any achievement gaps more regularly and act upon their findings.

The governing body is now a strength of the school. The chair of the governing body has ensured that governance is now more 'strategic and strict'. Governors have the skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account. For example, the standards committee is well led by a governor, a current headteacher, who understands achievement information and the progress that pupils should be making. This means that information is appropriately scrutinised and leaders are challenged to improve further where required.

There is a good deal of leadership potential within the school. You have responded positively to the findings of the previous monitoring visit and are now enabling leaders to work more effectively together. Extensive training and coaching are taking place and leaders said that a 'no excuses' culture was building. They said that they were hungry for further opportunities to work together and make more improvement happen. Creative approaches need to be found to help bring these opportunities about.

Marking has improved. It is clear that quality assurance is taking place to make sure that teachers are following the assessment policy and are providing feedback to pupils in a more helpful way. Subject leaders said that they felt the quality assurance systems had been helpful in holding teachers to account. Moving forward, it would be helpful for these leaders to play more of a role in some aspects of this quality assurance so that they can plan subject-specific activities.

The quality of teaching in mathematics and in science remains inconsistent. You have successfully recruited new subject leaders to these subject areas. These leaders have potential but they require effective mentoring and support in order that they can drive improvement at the pace that is required.

External support

You are part of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and have taken part in the headteacher peer review programme. Effective links have been established with The Becket School (Nottingham Catholic Teaching Alliance).

I intend to keep in regular contact with the school. It has been agreed that you will email me the detail of the GCSE and A-level results in August 2016.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector