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20 December 2017

Mrs Louise Wilson
Headteacher
Holy Family Catholic High School, Carlton
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Dear Mrs Wilson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Family Catholic High School, Carlton

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 2017, 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 June 2017. 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, in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- continue to focus on the impact of revised teaching and learning strategies on the progress of all pupils
- ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve in line with whole school attendance.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. School documentation, including the school self-evaluation document, improvement plans and other relevant documents, was scrutinised. I conducted short visits to several lessons with both you and one of your senior leaders. A sample of pupils' work was scrutinised alongside senior leaders. I also met with a group of pupils from Years 7 to 11 to evaluate their views on developments since the last inspection.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the staffing structure of the school. The deputy headteacher resigned and you appointed a new senior leader with an overview of teaching and learning. You reviewed the roles and responsibilities of all of your senior leaders and made the necessary changes to drive improvement. With the support of the local authority, you also secured an experienced interim senior leader and appointed a leader for inclusion. You restructured your middle leadership significantly and introduced three faculty leaders. Two new experienced foundation governors have been added to your governing body. You have appointed a new leader for physical education and a new leader for modern foreign languages.

Main findings

In September 2016, you introduced the 'resetting of the compass', and your drive for further improvement has been relentless. You have carried out swift, substantial and strategic restructuring of leadership at all levels and have raised expectations across the school. As a result, leadership and management have improved. Leaders and governors have taken a range of appropriate actions to address the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Your improvement plans are detailed, focused and evaluated accurately against criteria for success. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils have improved.

You have taken robust actions to eradicate weak teaching. Your senior leader overseeing teaching and learning has a clear focus on continuous improvement and has clearly identified areas of strength and areas for further development. Revised teaching and learning strategies are becoming embedded and used by most staff but not yet consistently across all subjects. You agreed with me that more work is needed in this area. You and your team have ensured that professional development is targeted following accurate monitoring of teaching and learning. You introduced teaching and learning coaches in each of your three recently formed faculties as part of a bespoke coaching programme, so that best practice is shared across all staff at the school. You have also used external support effectively, both through the local authority and a neighbouring school, so that staff learn from best

practice at other settings. You have recruited strongly in mathematics, science, English and the leadership of modern foreign languages and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving.

Following the recent review of pupil premium funding, you and your team have ensured that all recommendations have been actioned but recognise that some need more time to become embedded. As a result of the review, you launched the 'achievement unlocked' initiative, with a clear emphasis on evidence-based improvements for disadvantaged pupils, using targeted interventions. As a result, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils improved in 2017 and current school assessment information indicates continuous improvement. You acted swiftly to strengthen your attendance team with appropriate staff, changed school procedures related to absence and sharpened the analysis of attendance information. As a result, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has significantly improved in a short period of time. You acknowledge that more work is required here.

During our joint visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, you were able to demonstrate that the majority of staff use the school's revised teaching and learning policies consistently, including in science and modern foreign languages. Where learning is effective, the expectations were clearly high and the quality of the questioning by the teachers supported pupils to accelerate their learning. However, there is variation across subjects and teachers, and you have correctly identified the need for further improvement in embedding consistently the good practice seen in some lessons and pupils' books. Staffing has stabilised in science and this allows you to proceed with pace in ensuring continuous improvement in this subject. The actions that you have taken to improve the teaching and learning in modern foreign languages have resulted in improved consistency in applying the school's teaching and learning strategies. It is too early to see the impact of these on pupils' progress.

The governance of the school has improved. Since the review of governance, you and governors have put in place a comprehensive action plan. The governing body has been strengthened by the addition of two experienced foundation governors. As a result, all governors now have appropriate skills and expertise to provide more effective challenge and support to school leaders. Governors are committed and passionate about the school and the journey towards becoming a good school again. Governors are aligned to areas of the school and are becoming increasingly effective in their questioning and challenge about school improvement to leaders at all levels. Governors receive timely information which enables them to have a better understanding of the school's strengths, areas for improvement and priorities.

External support

The external support provided to the school has come from the local authority, the Diocese of Leeds, and a range of schools. The local authority has been effective in brokering support from other schools and instrumental in securing the appointment

of an experienced interim senior leader. The local authority improvement advisor knows the school well and has regular reviews with you to support your school's continuous improvement. You have ensured that leaders at all levels in your school are more outward facing and they regularly attend network meetings facilitated by the local authority and the Diocese of Leeds. The local authority conducted the pupil premium review and the Diocese of Leeds conducted the governance review. As a result, there are clear action plans for improvement in these areas.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis

Her Majesty's Inspector