

Serco Inspections  
Boundary House  
2 Wythall Green Way  
Middle Lane  
BIRMINGHAM  
West Midlands  
B47 6LW

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

T 0121 683 2347  
Amelia.baker@serco.com



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Mr Robert Hall  
Headteacher  
Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College  
Whitchurch Road  
Wellington  
Telford  
TF1 3DY

Dear Mr Hall

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 7 July 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the students and staff, Chair of Governors and the local authority representatives for their cooperation during the visit.

As a result of the inspection on 25 November 2009, the school was asked to:

- Raise achievement, particularly in key subjects, by:
  - ensuring that in lessons the planned activities consistently make use of the information teachers have about individual students' prior knowledge, ability and interests so that tasks motivate and challenge every learner
  - ensuring that marking and diagnosis of students' work consistently and regularly provides advice on what they need to do to improve their work, and expect students to act promptly upon that advice.
- Governors and school leaders should improve the rigour of their evaluation of the impact of school policies, particularly in relation to health and safety.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

At the time of the last inspection, the school's 2009 GCSE results showed that attainment was significantly below average across a number of attainment measures, including the proportion of students securing five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Progress measures for mathematics and English declined in 2009 and were significantly below expectations. However, evidence seen during this monitoring inspection from lesson visits and assessment information



provided by the school, including the 'early entry' results for Year 11 in English and module results in mathematics, indicate that the school is starting, successfully, to tackle underperformance. The school's most recent assessments indicate that, if students in Year 11 perform as expected, achievement is likely to be higher than that in 2009. The school's internal data for 2010 show the gap between boys' and girls' achievement is closing

In the lessons visited jointly with senior leaders, there was evidence of improvements in teaching and learning. There is a consistent approach to planning lessons across the school, which is ensuring lessons are delivered effectively. Planning of lessons showed that teachers are regularly using a range of strategies to develop learning. In the better lessons observed, there were many opportunities for working in pairs and in small groups – including peer assessment – and the pace of learning was good. Engaging starter activities ensured that lessons began well. Teaching assistants were being deployed effectively. Behaviour was generally well managed. However, some weaknesses remain in the challenge of learning outcomes in teachers' planning. In the less successful lessons, there was not enough focus on meeting the needs of students of different ability. The demands made on students were at too low a level and lessons lacked pace. Marking is improving. Books are now being regularly and consistently marked across the school. The quality of advice is informing students on how they can improve their performance, but needs to be more sharply focussed. However, there were many examples of precise target setting. Not all targets for improvement are reviewed with students, and there is often insufficient time allowed for reflection. There is stronger evidence to suggest that staff are taking a more consistent approach to assessment. Evidence of good practice to improve teaching was seen, such as: the 'teaching and learning matters' newsletters, 'kit list' for assessment and a 'swag bag' of classroom tips. Increased monitoring and evaluation, through informal, brief, but regular observations of lessons, is now taking place. Findings are being reviewed with subject leaders. Overall, the management of teaching and learning is well coordinated by a senior leader. The monitoring and evaluation undertaken by subject leaders is not yet sufficiently robust across all subject areas.

Governors and school leaders are conducting a more systematic review of school policies. They have introduced a system to ensure all policies are kept in a central folder and reviewed. Work is well underway, but not yet complete. Policies such as those for learning and teaching have a clear schedule to ensure they are monitored, evaluated and reviewed. There has been a stronger focus on health and safety. Support from the local authority is providing expertise in conducting a health and safety audit and reviewing policies. An action plan is in place for fire-risk assessments. Systems for safeguarding students were included in this monitoring inspection and found to meet national requirements.

The support from the local authority is effective. Consultant support is in place for English, mathematics and science, and a number of other areas. Many visits by consultants have already been completed. As yet, the support has not been



reviewed or evaluated. There has been some very useful work undertaken by the National Challenge Adviser, such as the review on line management and quality assurance. Findings have provided the school with a clear list of key recommendations. A very detailed raising achievement plan is in place to improve and monitor the performance of the school.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh  
Her Majesty's Inspector

