

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

3 March 2015

Ms J Ranger
Principal
John Henry Newman Academy
Grange Road
Littlemore
Oxford
OX4 4LS

Dear Ms Ranger

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to John Henry Newman Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 2 March 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- ensure teachers and teaching assistants monitor pupils' behaviour closely so they can guide those not fully focused on their classwork
- make sure teachers plan writing activities which challenge and extend more-able writers.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior and middle leaders, and representatives from the sponsor including the Chief Executive of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust and two governors, one of whom is the Chair of the Governing Body. I

evaluated the academy's improvement plan. I made short visits to lessons to observe pupils' behaviour and learning.

Context

An Executive Principal was appointed in January 2015.

Main findings

You and your leaders have made a determined effort to improve the academy. Working in tandem with the Executive Principal, you are carefully checking that the actions you take lead higher standards of teaching and attainment.

You are tracking students' progress more rigorously. You are beginning to monitor pupils who made weak progress last year more closely so they make the rapid progress needed to catch up. Middle leaders are making better use of data from teachers' assessments of pupils' work when they judge the quality of teaching. These judgements are consequently more accurate. You have rightly identified that in Year 3 and Year 5 pupils' achievement is weaker. You have taken timely action to improve this by providing support for pupils who are falling behind, including extra lessons with a dedicated support teacher. You are carefully checking the impact of the extra help pupils receive.

You have now created an extra teaching group in Year 2 and as a result the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils is being more effectively managed. You have also created a support base for pupils who need extra guidance in how to manage their behaviour, called the Phoenix Centre. Consequently, there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour and no fixed-term exclusions. Pupils' behaviour is improving in some classes but not all. In some lessons pupils do not concentrate well enough when they are sitting at the front listening to the teacher explaining the work. However, changes to the Reception area environment and more adult-led activities mean pupils' attitudes to learning are improving rapidly. In Key Stage 2, some teachers and teaching assistants do not keep a close enough eye on how pupils behave when they are completing activities. As a result, silly behaviour, which interferes with their work, sometimes goes unnoticed and therefore unchecked.

Middle leaders have improved the way they monitor whole-academy approaches. As a result of their checks, prompt changes are made. The English subject leader has introduced an effective approach to teaching writing. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were analysing how writers use colourful vocabulary at the start of a story. This close analysis enabled them to have a sharper focus on their own vocabulary choices and consequently achieve well in their writing. Some more-able pupils have the skills to move more quickly from discussing their ideas to writing them down. However,

sometimes teachers do not challenge these pupils well enough and this slows pupils' progress.

Governors now hold leaders to account more robustly. A subcommittee of governors with relevant skills and experience carefully analyses the information on pupils' progress provided by the academy. A representative from this committee reports back to governors about the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Following training from the sponsors, governors are now better able to use this information to monitor how effectively they govern and challenge leaders with greater rigour.

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

External support

The sponsor has supported improvements by appointing an Executive Principal. The sponsor has helped the governors by commissioning the services of a national leader of governance to work alongside them. The sponsor's representative has a very sharp understanding of the academy's progress. He knows clearly where further development is needed. He has brokered bespoke support for middle leaders which has included training from partners, including Oxford Brookes University.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard
Her Majesty's Inspector