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Mrs P Steele
St Edmund Campion Catholic School & Sixth Form Centre
Sutton Road
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Dear Mrs Steele

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Edmund Campion Catholic School & Sixth Form Centre

Following my visit to your school on 20 September 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 January 2016. 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with various groups of individuals to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings were held with you and your senior leaders; middle leaders; pupils from a range of year groups, including sixth form students; members of the governing body and a representative of the Birmingham Education Partnership. School action plans, a range of school-based information about pupils' attainment and progress, and the outcomes of monitoring activities were evaluated. Learning walks were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team, and an assembly was observed.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, a number of teachers have left the school and others have been appointed to replace them. Two science intervention coordinators have been appointed to support pupils. Restructuring of senior and middle leadership roles, and of the roles and responsibilities of governors, has taken place.

Main findings

The school is taking appropriate and effective action to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.

The support provided to mathematics and science middle leaders by senior leaders with appropriate subject specialisms is now becoming firmly embedded and is having a positive impact on the quality of leadership and management in these subjects. As in mathematics, intervention coordinators are now deployed in science to support disadvantaged pupils and those who are in danger of falling behind.

Teaching in mathematics is improving because of the ongoing, clear focus in staff training on developing pupils' reasoning, fluency and problem-solving skills. The positive impact of this was evident in the lessons observed and, according to school records, in the improved progress pupils are making in all year groups. School information about the achievement of Year 11 pupils in 2016 indicates improvements in attainment and progress in mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils. A focus on improving numeracy is now a regular feature of form time for all pupils. All staff have received training on the use of correct mathematical language to facilitate this.

At all key stages, the enhanced responsibility and accountability of middle leaders, and revised systems involving regular book scrutinies and lesson observations, ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is more effectively monitored, including in mathematics.

A review of the use of pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding has been undertaken. Recommendations have been acted on, and improvements are emerging in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who require additional support with their reading.

A review of governance has led to changes in the roles and responsibilities of governors. More accessible information about pupils' progress is helping governors to gain a more accurate picture of the performance of current pupils. This deeper understanding in turn gives them the confidence to ask challenging questions of you and your leaders.

Pupils' conduct around the school and in lessons is improving because of changes to the school's behaviour and rewards and consequences policies. As a result of effective training and development, teachers have higher expectations about pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school and are now much more consistent in their application of school policies. Pupils comment positively on the changes this is making to learning in lessons. They also say that they like the fact that they are expected to look smart and wear their uniform with pride. In the learning walks undertaken during the monitoring visit, pupils were attentive and engaged, listening well and working hard.

External support

External support has been minimal and much of the improvement work has been initiated and carried out by you and your leaders. Some support has been received from the Birmingham Education Partnership. This has focused on reviewing the school's action plans and evaluating progress against them. These evaluations have been very positive.

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

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector