

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

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

**Direct T** 01695 566937

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** jsimmons@cfbt.com



12 March 2015

Ms Heather Scott  
Interim Principal  
All Saints Catholic High School  
Roughwood Drive  
Northwood  
Knowsley  
Merseyside  
L33 8XF

Dear Ms Scott

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints Catholic High School**

Following my visit to All Saints on 11 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2014.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held separate meetings with you, the two deputy Principals, a representative from the local authority, the local authority's School Improvement Adviser and a representative from the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool. I spoke, by telephone, with the Chair of the Governing Body. I was taken on a tour of the school by two Year 7 students and met with a group of Year 10 students. During the latter meeting I had the opportunity to ask the students about the changes to the school since the most recent inspection and together we looked at the work in their English and mathematics books. I reviewed and evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school improvement plan. I took into consideration the separate reviews carried out by two National Leaders of Education; the first, an evaluation of the governors' use of the pupil premium (additional government monies) and the second an appraisal of the school's policies relating to performance management.

## **Context**

Prior to the previous inspection, the Principal had left the school and at the time of the Ofsted team's visit the two deputy Principals had overall responsibility for leading and managing the school. Since the inspection, the Archdiocese, in partnership with the local authority, secured your services as Interim Principal with the intention of bringing stability to the school's senior leadership team and driving forward the school's improvement agenda. In addition, this allowed governors the time to secure the services of a permanent post holder. The latter has now been accomplished and the new Principal will join the staff of All Saints at the start of the summer term. In the interim you have restructured the senior leadership team, clarifying each team member's role and responsibilities. As a result, you report that senior leaders' lines of accountability have been established and clarified.

Since the previous inspection, a review of the arrangements for governance has been carried by a suitably qualified professional. As a result, under the direction of the Archdiocese and in partnership with the local authority the governing body has been reconstituted. The new Chair of the Governing Body is a National Leader of Governance and the membership of the governing body has been strengthened by the addition of individuals who have a record of successful experience in education.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

There is general agreement among the stakeholder groups I met that the judgements of inspectors at the previous inspection were correct and the areas for improvement, highlighted in the report, are the right ones for the school.

Since the inspection, you and your colleagues have rewritten the school improvement plan. This document links each of the school's development priorities and the actions to address them with the areas for improvement in the inspection report. Staff leading on each of the actions being taken are identified and, as a result, it is clear who governors can hold to account for the impact of the measures being taken to improve the school. The timings in the plan reflect the urgency with which senior leaders and governors want to improve the school; however, these could be sharper with actions having definite start and end dates. This in turn, will bring greater focus to the work of the governors' executive monitoring board, enabling them to determine, in a timely manner, the effectiveness of senior leaders' work to improve the school.

Senior leaders' targets for improving the quality of teaching and increasing students' rates of attendance, over the period of the plan, are clearly stated. Although the targets for improving students' attendance are ambitious, the milestone targets for

the quality of teaching are less so. The time-scale for improving the quality of teaching, so that it is at least consistently good, is too conservative and needs to be much shorter if the school is to rapidly improve students' results.

Senior leaders have revised the strategy for setting students' targets. Each student's end of KS2 attainment data are used as the starting point against which their annual achievement targets are set. The expectation is that each student will make progress in-line with that of their peers across the country and, as a result, raise teachers' expectations of what their students can achieve. However, the school's end of Key Stage 4 expectations are presented as headline figures for the whole cohort of students. They have not been broken down into the expectations for each group in the school. Consequently, the current data does not allow senior leaders and governors to monitor the achievement of these groups and determine whether gaps in attainment and progress are closing.

The local authority's statement of action is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. It provides information about how the local authority will support the school's senior leaders and governors in addressing the priorities in the school improvement plan and, as a result, is consistent with it. Arrangements for informing parents of the proposed actions to improve the school and taking their views into account are clear. Further, the period within which proposed actions are planned are identified. However, aspects of the statement of action could be strengthened. For example, the links between the local authority's planned actions and the areas for improvement in the inspection report are not made explicit enough. Further, although the local authority's intended actions are described, the intended impact of each action is not. Consequently, it is not clear how the local authority will measure the success or otherwise of the support it is giving to the school. Nevertheless, taken together both plans provide a coordinated approach to improving the school and are an effective road map for leaders and managers to follow on the school's journey to good.

Since your appointment and working with a National Leader for Education you have reviewed a number of the policies relating to performance management. You have also introduced a four-weekly staff forum, giving your colleagues a platform to raise issues and share their concerns. You are firmly of the belief that this has brought much need transparency to the way the school is managed and clarified senior leaders' expectations for staffs' professional practice.

Since the inspection, the local authority has brokered the support of a number of specialist leaders of education from local successful schools to work with subject staff. Further, the local authority is supporting the deployment of an adviser to work with you and your senior colleagues to help you deliver the school improvement

plan. However, much of this work is in its initial stages and as a result it is too early to assess its impact.

Those students that I met during my visit could describe some of the changes that have taken place since the inspection. They are of the opinion that behaviour in lessons is improving. Although, there is still a way to go before disruptive behaviour is eradicated altogether; some students, for example, expressed their frustration at having their learning disrupted by a small minority.

When students were asked about the marking of their work, they said that teachers, consistently, used a common framework. That is, teachers write comments under two headings, 'what went well' highlighting the strengths of a piece of work and 'even better if' indicating what students need to do to improve it. In the sample of mathematics books scrutinised, teachers' marking is regular and up-to-date. Students follow their teachers' advice about how to improve a piece of work and, as a result, there is evidence that this is having a positive impact on students' progress in this subject. In English, however the marking in students' books is not of this quality and there are examples of marking that is unhelpful. When asked, the students said that teachers' marking across subjects is inconsistent both in terms of its regularity and quality.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

In line with our discussions we agreed that the school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Knowsley, the Director of Education for the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry

**Her Majesty's Inspector**