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1 July 2016

Mrs Helen Gilroy
Headteacher
St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College
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Dear Mrs Gilroy

Short inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College

Following my visit to the school on 8 June 2016 with Julia Wright, Ofsted inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school converted to academy status in November 2012 and the subsequent monitoring inspection in June 2015. The visit on 8 June 2016 completed the inspection that commenced in February 2016, and which was suspended due to the death of a pupil in tragic circumstances.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. A strong, focused determination to enable pupils to flourish and achieve well characterises your work, and that of senior leaders and staff.

Academy councillors and the board of the Bishop Konstant Academy Trust ('the trust') share in this common endeavour and shape their efforts to support and challenge leaders accordingly. They have ensured that you have been amply well supported and appropriately challenged during a difficult period in the academy's history. Consequently you, your leadership team and staff are succeeding in maintaining and improving the high standards of care for pupils that enable them to engage in learning and achieve well. You demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and weaker areas of the academy's work and know what needs to be done to improve those areas.

Your unwavering focus on improving outcomes for pupils and ensuring that they are kept safe and safeguarded is reflected in the commitment to pupils shown in the

day-to-day work of other leaders and of your staff. They know and pursue your priorities for further improvement.

The vast majority of staff and parents who responded to the questionnaires believe that pupils are kept safe. Pupils confirm this view. They conduct themselves well throughout the day and have positive attitudes to their learning. Effective teaching is improving the progress pupils make. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly.

The academy has maintained high levels of attainment over a number of years. Attainment is well above national averages. Leaders have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection with focused energy. They recognised correctly that a more rigorous approach to tracking the progress pupils make was required and this has led to more effective teaching and better rates of progress.

You have worked with senior leaders to review the curriculum in the sixth form to ensure that it matches the needs of learners and the skills of teaching staff.

You have sharpened processes to check on pupils' attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils, to reduce persistent absence. This keeps both them safer and supports their better achievement.

You acknowledge that further challenge is required to ensure that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils who make more than expected progress should increase further. In addition, there is more work to be done to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, including disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that the arrangements to keep pupils safe and to safeguard them are effective, and that detailed, good-quality records are kept.

The work done to secure the well-being of pupils and to keep them safe is a cornerstone of the academy's work. You are firm in your belief that pupils' well-being underpins your work to ensure that pupils achieve well. As a result, pupils show respect for each other and for adults. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for well. They know that there is always someone they can turn to if they have a problem. This contributes to their safety.

The academy's processes to ensure that only suitable adults work with pupils are well established. Safer recruitment practices and all the required checks of staff are carried out and recorded thoroughly.

Academy councillors are well informed about safeguarding issues, and use their own expertise and knowledge to support and challenge safeguarding leaders. As a result, they know that arrangements are carefully audited with the local authority and that training for staff at appropriate levels is up to date. You look after vulnerable pupils very well, using all the information available about their needs to keep them safe and enable them to access education.

Safeguarding leaders have a good knowledge of key local safeguarding issues. This enables them to provide well-chosen support and information to pupils, including how to keep safe on the internet, drug and alcohol misuse, child sexual exploitation and the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

You engage the support of a range of carefully chosen outside providers, such as Barnados and the local police force to make sure pupils have accurate, up-to-date information.

The impact of the school's work in developing a culture of safeguarding is seen in the provision and use of a 'live' online counselling service, where pupils can raise concerns. It is seen, too, in the readiness of pupils to self-refer or refer their peers to appropriate staff, if they have a concern.

You have put in place rigorous arrangements to monitor attendance and are quick to follow up absences to ensure that you know where pupils are and that they are safe. You recognise that some disadvantaged pupils do not attend regularly enough. You work with families and other external teams, including health services, to improve their attendance. This is reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. You recognise that continued work is needed to reduce this number further.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have continued their work to sustain good achievement. They have also worked hard to take effective actions to improve outcomes, where performance was not consistently of the same high quality.
- Along with academy councillors and members of the trust, you have improved the effectiveness of leadership. You involve leaders at all levels more fully in the processes for monitoring performance and providing additional support to staff and pupils where this is needed. You are working with the trust and academy council to restructure leadership to ensure it is fit for purpose to meet the school's needs in the future.
- Following your analysis of performance in examinations in summer 2015, you have made your priorities clear. You have taken action to increase the progress of the most-able pupils and disadvantaged pupils to improve outcomes in Year 11 this year and the progress made by these pupils in other year groups. As a consequence, these pupils are making better progress but there remain some inconsistencies, particularly in the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress.
- The gaps between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and others making expected progress in English and mathematics have been closed in key stage 3. Similarly, at key stage 4, the gap between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and others making and exceeding expected progress is closing, as it is against other pupils nationally.
- The school's current focus on improving progress further, especially for disadvantaged pupils, the most-able pupils and for students in the sixth form following A-level courses, is reaping rewards. Staff development through

focused learning groups, for example, is creating opportunities to share effective practice. As a consequence, this is leading to better learning.

- Checks on the progress made by the most-able pupils, across year groups and subjects, show that the steps taken to plan learning that stretches them are increasingly effective. Again, you recognise that there remain inconsistencies in some subjects and that further work is required in this area.
- You have taken appropriate steps to sharpen monitoring and evaluation procedures so that you have more precise information about pupils' progress and the impact of teaching. This is enabling you to target additional support where it is most needed and is contributing to the improvements that are being made.
- You check the impact of teaching by looking at pupils' work and visiting lessons, so that you can provide effective challenge and support to teachers where this is needed.
- You have taken steps to address the progress made by students following A-level courses in similar ways and by carrying out a thorough review of the curriculum offered in the sixth form. These actions are leading to better rates of progress and a renewed focus on high-quality advice and guidance so students can make well-informed choices about their courses. This work, alongside sharper monitoring and tracking of progress, has rapidly improved the overall progress made by students following A-level courses from below the national average to above it.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- well-targeted and planned teaching provides consistently high and appropriate levels of challenge to disadvantaged pupils and the most-able pupils, so that the proportion of these groups making more than expected progress continues to increase
- the school continues its efforts to further reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, especially disadvantaged pupils.

Yours sincerely

Chris Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, my colleagues and I met with you, other senior leaders and middle leaders to discuss the school's performance and the steps being taken to improve it further. We talked with pupils informally and also met with a group of pupils from different years to find out their views about the school. We discussed with academy councillors and the trust how well they know the school, and how they support and challenge leaders to make sure pupils are safeguarded and achieve well. We took into account the views of parents, using the survey 'Parent View', and the responses of staff to the staff questionnaire. We made short visits to lessons with senior leaders and scrutinised the work pupils produce in their books and files to see how well they learn and make progress. We considered a wide range of documents, including records of attendance, checks on the suitability of staff and the school's records of the progress pupils are making.