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31 May 2017

Mr Paul Dunne
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Dear Mr Dunne

Short inspection of Saint John Bosco College

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2017 with Janet Shadick, 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 was judged to be good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The school has been through a time of significant change and upheaval over the past few years. At the time of the previous inspection, two schools merged to become Saint John Bosco College, which was housed in temporary accommodation. In October 2015, the school finally moved into its purpose-built premises in Wandsworth. You acknowledge that these changes have at times proved very challenging, particularly in maintaining the confidence of parents and the community. Consequently, the school is still far from full and pupils, often with complex needs, frequently arrive in-year from other schools and localities.

Since your appointment as acting headteacher in January 2017, you have taken swift action to identify and address specific areas that require immediate attention. To do this effectively, you reviewed the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. The newly formed leadership team has clear priorities: that teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school; that pupils attend regularly; and that a higher number of pupils apply to join the school at the start of Year 7. Even in the short time that you have been in post, there have been some significant improvements in these areas. However, you are not complacent. You know that far more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their starting points or the subject they are studying, are supported to make consistently good progress. You, your leaders and governors have a detailed plan for school improvement that

is already proving effective for current pupils. You work closely with the local authority and diocese to ensure that these actions are validated and appropriate. Your drive and determination to make Saint John Bosco College a school of choice in the wider community is already proving successful.

Saint John Bosco is a Catholic college, but admits pupils from a wide range of faiths and cultures and these differences are embraced and celebrated. You have established an ethos based on Saint John Bosco's educational philosophy of learning through 'reason, religion and kindness'. As this is a small school, staff know each and every pupil and relationships are consequently highly positive. Pupils mix well in this harmonious environment and benefit from personalised support and guidance. This includes pupils who attend Savio, the specialist autistic unit, who seamlessly mingle with all pupils and have access to mainstream provision for much of the day. The school's vision that 'it is not enough for young people to be loved, they must know that they are loved' permeates the school's culture. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given high priority across the school.

Governors are passionate about the success of the school, both in the Catholic diocese and the local community. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that require rapid and sustained improvement. They have confidence in the current leadership team's ability and capacity to deliver these improvements. Governors are knowledgeable and well trained. They use information provided by the school to inform their searching questions. Governors work closely with the local authority and the diocese to ensure that they meet all of their statutory responsibilities. They are resolute in their vision for the school and the priorities for future improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are well aware of the potential risks facing young people in the wider community and the complex needs of some. Consequently, staff are well trained, know their statutory responsibilities and are highly vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are kept safe both in and out of school. In particular, staff are acutely aware of the potential for gang affiliation, knife crime, child sexual exploitation, grooming and female genital mutilation. Consequently, regular information is shared with both staff and pupils on how they can keep themselves safe. All staff have received training in the 'Prevent' duty on preventing pupils from being radicalised by extremists.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. You check carefully on staff's suitability to work at the school and keep comprehensive records. You work closely with external agencies and ensure that pupils and their families receive wraparound care where appropriate. You regularly check on the quality of safeguarding by encouraging external validation of your provision.

Pupils explained that they felt safe and happy at school. They socialise well together, respect each other's differences and are polite to visitors. They know whom they could turn to should they have a concern and are confident that it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- You and your leadership team have prioritised strategies to raise pupils' achievement. These include whole-school initiatives and specific actions arising from analysis of some pupils' weak performance in the 2016 GCSE examinations. In particular, you are focused on ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high quality across the school. Information provided by school leaders and work in pupils' books indicate that current pupils are making good progress over time. This includes the most able, disadvantaged and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Your analysis of the 2016 outcomes identified some groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who underperformed. It also sets the data in the context of a range of issues affecting the cohort, including a number of transient pupils who arrived at the school late on during the GCSE course and a number whose attendance and engagement at school were extremely low. Equally, some pupils did not have data for the tests at the end of key stage 2, and therefore, their good progress was not included in the national headline figures. Lessons learned from this analysis are informing your current actions.
- You and other leaders are actively seeking to remove potential barriers to learning for particular pupils, including poor literacy and numeracy, attendance and engagement. Whole-school strategies are now in place to tackle each of these areas. Pupil premium and special educational needs funding is used effectively to provide a range of specific support for pupils. Leaders and governors are now vigilant in ensuring that the planned spending of these funds has measurable outcomes, linked to pupils' progress.
- You know where there is very effective teaching and where further direction is needed. Support from middle and senior leaders is available for staff whose teaching is not of the consistently high standard expected. A mentoring and coaching programme encourages teachers with a range of expertise to share ideas and experiences and is highly valued by staff. Since January, you have taken a more formal approach to those staff whose practice does not improve following a support plan. In this way, you are moving closer to establishing consistently good or better teaching across all subject areas.
- Staff know every pupil's academic, social and emotional needs. These are discussed at regular progress monitoring meetings to ensure that all pupils have the required support and guidance. Pupils, particularly those in the older years, appreciate the help and guidance they receive.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in this fully inclusive school. Leadership of the Savio provision is effective and pupils are well integrated into the full life of the school. The unit has received strong validation for its work from external reviews, and plans to increase its pupil capacity are being discussed.
- Improving attendance has been a high priority. Since January, a range of initiatives designed to encourage better attendance has had a significant impact. Sporadic attenders have started to come to school more regularly. As a result, attendance is now in line with the national average and the impact on pupils' progress has been very positive.
- Pupils' conduct around the school site is generally calm and considerate. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and show an interest in their work. Now that they are settled into a permanent school site, pupils are finding it easier to abide by the behaviour policy. Pupils say that this is applied consistently. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions for poor behaviour has dropped significantly this year.
- Pupil and student numbers in the main school and sixth form remain low and consequently, many pupils arrive at times other than at the start of September, often with very complex needs. This has had a negative impact on financial resources and the stability of the school. In order to address this, you have worked very hard this year to promote the school both locally and across the Catholic community. Outreach work, liaison with local primary schools and Saturday school for primary-age pupils have all had a significant impact. The current Years 7 and 8 have a much healthier roll than previous years and numbers for entry in September 2017 are much higher again.
- You have identified the sixth form as a school improvement priority. Student numbers remain low and the performance of students in the 2016 examinations fell compared with the previous year. A new leader of this area has ensured that the programmes of study meet statutory guidance and that there are opportunities to develop students' employability skills and wider curriculum interests. However, the progress students make in the sixth form across subjects is still too variable. The retention of students into the sixth form is too low, causing a further financial burden on the school. Consequently, you have created a new choice of pathways for September 2017 in order to cater for a wider range of student ability. Students will now be able to study academic or vocational subjects and re-take English and mathematics GCSE should they need to. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is checked carefully, as in other areas of the school, and is improving.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent actions to ensure that teaching is of a consistently high standard, and engages pupils in their learning, continue and are regularly reviewed
- the impact of initiatives to address pupils' barriers to learning are checked regularly so that all pupils make at least good progress from their starting points
- students receive appropriate advice, guidance and support so that they choose courses in the sixth form that they have the academic ability to succeed in.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, other senior leaders and teachers. They met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. They also met with two advisers from the local authority to discuss the support offered to the school. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, curriculum information, referrals to external agencies and the register of checks made on staff. Inspectors visited lessons in key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form to gather evidence on particular strands of teaching, learning and assessment. They spoke to pupils and heard them read. Inspectors looked in detail at the progress of identified pupils through their work and assessment records. Inspectors took account of 49 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted's online survey Parent View.