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5 July 2012

Mrs E Siddall
Headteacher
St George's Roman Catholic Primary School
Overdale
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North Yorkshire
YO11 3RE

Dear Mrs Siddall

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St George's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 and 4 July 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director – Children's and Young People's Service for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Introduce more rigorous safeguarding arrangements to comply with, and fully meet requirements, so that the needs of all pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are identified, monitored and met effectively by senior leaders and the governing body.
- Improve the achievement of pupils, especially those with special educational needs, in English and mathematics across Years 1 to 6 by:
 - ensuring that teachers assess accurately and regularly the progress of all pupils
 - introducing rigorous procedures to check pupils' progress throughout the year and tackle underperformance
 - providing consistently high-quality opportunities for pupils to share ideas about their work, apply mathematical skills in real-life contexts, and write with increasing accuracy and meaning for different audiences and purposes.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that none is inadequate and most is good by:
 - ensuring activities are stimulating and enjoyable, and reducing the amount of time that teachers take to introduce and explain the activities
 - matching activities more closely to the needs of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs
 - maximising opportunities in lessons to assess informally how well pupils are learning and providing helpful feedback to enhance their understanding.
- Reduce persistent and low-level disruption in some years by encouraging pupils to participate sooner in 'hands on,' interesting, experiences.
- Improve the school's leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that self-evaluation is more systematic and accurate
 - distributing responsibilities evenly across the school and developing the roles of all leaders and managers
 - providing members of the governing body with regular, detailed reports about the school's work so that governors can fulfil their statutory duties to check on the school's overall performance
 - enhancing the curriculum so that pupils' key skills and qualities are developed across all years in a planned and cohesive manner.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St George's Roman Catholic Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 July 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils and representatives from the local authority.

Context

The substantive headteacher at the time of the last section 5 inspection has been absent from school since December 2011. At the time of the inspection two part-time acting headteachers shared leadership responsibilities. With effect from April 2012 the acting headteacher from a neighbouring school was seconded and is now solely in charge. A new deputy headteacher and three classroom teachers are expected to take up their posts at the beginning of the autumn term 2012.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The end of Year 6 national tests in 2011 showed that attainment in English and mathematics was broadly in line with the national average and on track to meet the government's floor targets. An analysis of school held data, outcomes of lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils work indicate that achievement will be broadly similar this year. However, pupils throughout the school are beginning to make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. This is because school leaders are aware that improved outcomes will be dependent on consistently good teaching as pupils move through the school. To this end school leaders are focussed on developing classroom practice and raising expectations of teachers. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are also making better progress in relation to their starting points, although it is less marked.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve the achievement of pupils, especially those with special educational needs, in English and mathematics across Years 1 to 6 – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

At the time of the previous inspection teaching and learning was judged to be good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and this remains the case. The quality of teaching is inconsistent within Key Stage 2, but it is beginning to improve as a result of professional training and support provided by school leaders and the local authority. No inadequate teaching was observed during the monitoring inspection. Features that reflect improvements in teaching include; better classroom organisation, effective behaviour

management, an increasing awareness of what pupils are capable of achieving and greater consideration in ensuring that activities are stimulating and enjoyable, thereby providing pupils with opportunities to engage with their learning in practical and meaningful ways. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they enjoy school because lessons are interesting and more fun. This is why pupils are beginning to make better progress than they were in February 2012. While improvements in teaching have taken place, much work remains to be done to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school. The ability of teachers to identify pupils' misconceptions during lessons and plan appropriate activities to address them is variable. Where it happens, pupils' progress is maintained. When assessment is less effective, the rate at which pupils progress is restricted, particularly in relation to the more-able and low-attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently linked to pupil targets and on occasions not up to date. This level of feedback does not consolidate understanding. The support provided by teaching assistants is not as effective as it should be, particularly in relation to low-attaining pupils.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching so that none is inadequate and most is good – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are generally well behaved and there is less low-level disruption than at the time of the previous inspection. They are courteous and polite, take an active part in lessons, work well together and listen to their teachers. These positive attitudes to learning are making an important contribution to pupils' learning. On occasion, a minority of pupils becomes restless when activities are not closely matched to their learning needs as a result of weak assessment and when introductions to lessons are too long. A number of safeguarding issues have been addressed. A recent review has taken place to ensure that the needs of all pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are met and this is being monitored by senior leaders. As a result Child Protection arrangements now meet statutory requirements. Issues relating to site security have also been addressed. Staff are taking a more collaborative approach to safeguarding issues and this will require further monitoring until all initiatives are embedded in the day-to-day running of the school.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- introduce more rigorous safeguarding arrangements to comply with, and fully meet requirements, so that the needs of all pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are identified, monitored and met effectively by senior leaders and the governing body – satisfactory
- reduce persistent and low-level disruption in some years by encouraging pupils to participate sooner in 'hands on,' interesting, experiences – satisfactory

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Even though the acting headteacher has been in post for a short time, she has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school and successfully challenged performance. As such, she is well placed to continue to secure further improvement. High professional expectations, underpinned by a commitment to improving the quality of provision for all pupils, is driving improvement. A focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning through a combination of monitoring and support is beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' progress. Effective systems have been introduced to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. The introduction of regular pupil progress meetings through which teachers are held to account is helping staff to focus more sharply on the needs of individual pupils. This is a recent innovation and further work linked to assessment remains to be undertaken before accelerated progress takes place. The governing body is ably led by the Chair, who has acted promptly to ensure that the governing body meets their statutory responsibilities. Governors are quickly acquiring a deeper understanding about the work of the school because they are better informed. Steps have been taken to appoint a deputy headteacher and two teachers who will take on responsibility for special education needs and the development of English and mathematics across the school. However, it is not possible to evaluate the impact they will have on provision at this time. A review of the curriculum is planned for the beginning of next term with a focus on providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve the school's leadership and management at all levels – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has effectively supported the school with regard to both strengthening leadership and supporting classroom practice. The action plan was judged to be fit for purpose and has an appropriate focus on the key issues.