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12 December 2012

Mrs Jacqueline Williams
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School,
Bradshaw Row,
Church,
Accrington,
Lancashire
BB5 4HG

Dear Mrs Williams

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the governing body, representatives of the local authority and a group of pupils. The HMI was taken on a tour of the school and met briefly with all teachers and teaching assistants. The school improvement plans and records of the school's monitoring were evaluated.

Context

There have been no changes to staffing or the school's organisation since the inspection.

Main findings

With support from the local authority, school leaders have written a detailed action plan that addresses all the areas identified as requiring improvement in the recent

inspection. The plan includes precise timescales and appropriate success criteria. There are clear milestones by which the impact of actions can be measured relating to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. It would be helpful to add further measures to compare attainment at Sacred Heart and attainment nationally, and monitor whether the gap is closing. The plan is comprehensive and suitably supported by action plans to improve literacy and numeracy. However it does not always make clear the role that governors will have in monitoring and evaluating progress with actions and the impact they having.

Since the inspection, the school has taken appropriate action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The marking policy and expectations for the presentation of pupils' written work have been revised and agreed with all staff. Professional development has focused on promoting independent learning and organising guided reading. The headteacher has taken appropriate action to develop the skills of subject leaders through coaching in lesson observation and scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. Lesson observation records provide clear points for feedback but do not always refer to pupils' progress.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommends that further action is taken to:

- ensure all staff are held accountable for the implementation of revised whole school policies and the progress of the pupils they teach
- develop a brief action plan for governors outlining monitoring activities and how they will evaluate the impact of actions.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority and Diocese have provided considerable support to the school. This has been effective in helping to strengthen governance and leadership. The local authority has provided a range of consultant and adviser support which is valued by teachers and is supporting improvements in teaching. Further external support is planned through establishing links with a National Leader of Education.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.