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Samantha Griffiths
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Coronation Crescent
Madeley
Telford
TF7 5EJ

Dear Mrs Griffiths

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 January 2013, 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, five members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. A learning walk was completed with the headteacher. The school improvement plans were also evaluated.

Context

The headteacher took up post in January 2013. One teacher is leaving at the end of term. Another member of the teaching staff is off on long-term absence.

Main findings

The headteacher has responded with suitable urgency and has:

- undertaken a careful review of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- written an appropriate action plan that provides a secure basis for improvement

- improved how lesson observations are carried out and how the findings are recorded and shared with teachers
- carried out joint lesson observations with a member of the governing body.

The improvement plan charts a clear route setting out what is needed for St Mary's to become a good school. However, the plan does not prioritise those aspects which need the most urgent attention. Governors are aware that they need to keep a more careful and frequent check on the learning and progress of pupils. They are also aware that they need to hold teachers more closely to account for the impact of their work and that rewards are directly linked to the progress made by pupils and are seeking advice on how best to do this.

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 recommend that further action is taken to:

- increase the frequency of meetings and monitoring activities carried out by the headteacher and members of the governing body
- make sure that governors are better able to ask the right questions of the headteacher
- implement a whole-school approach to the teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and writing
- make sure that teachers know which aspects of their teaching need improving the most and that follow-up visits are carried out to check that the areas for improvement have been acted upon.

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

External support

The local authority has provided extensive support to the school. It has appointed additional governors to the governing body and seconded leaders from other schools to help improve the quality of leadership and management. Officers have arranged for the new headteacher to be supported by a Local Leader of Education. A review of the school's action plan has taken place leading to a more structured approach. Regular review meetings between the school's leadership and the local authority officers have taken place. Further training has been planned to help the governing body better able to check on the impact of actions taken by the headteacher to improve the school quickly.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Telford and Wrekin.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector