

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566 857  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:**  
jkinsman@cfbt.com



24 January 2013

Mrs M.B. Lightfoot  
Headteacher  
St Oswald's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Nash Avenue  
South Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE34 8NS

Dear Mrs Lightfoot

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Oswald's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit meetings were held with senior leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A range of documentation was evaluated including the school, local authority and diocese's improvement plans and data on pupils' progress.

#### **Context**

There have been a number of changes to the school's organisation since the inspection. One part-time teacher resigned in December. Another part-time teacher has taken on the vacant role full time. A temporary teacher has been appointed to replace another teacher on long term sickness leave. Governors are currently re-advertising for a deputy headteacher. The diocese has secured a National Leader of Education to support the school's improvement. The local authority has accelerated the support to the school and conducted a monitoring visit in January to check the progress the school is making towards the recommendations within the inspection report. The authority has also developed an action plan with the Diocese.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders are resolute in their shared quest to improve the school so that it is good or better when it is next inspected. Appropriate actions have been put in place to drive improvement quickly. For example, the school improvement plan has been adapted effectively to tackle the recommendations in the inspection report. This plan links well to the local authority and diocesan plan. However, some targets are not as sharp as they need to be. This makes it difficult for leaders, including the governing body, to check the difference the actions planned will make to governance and pupils' progress and achievements, particularly girls.

School leaders are confident that actions being taken are leading to improvements in teaching quality; particularly in Key Stage 2. Leaders know changes in staffing have slowed the rate of improvement in Key Stage 1 but are taking appropriate action to improve matters. Training, sharing good practice and lesson observations are helping teachers to know what good and outstanding teaching is. Leaders' feedback to teachers following lesson observations includes improvement points that are checked at the time of the next observation. When teaching has not been good enough, time limited action plans have been developed with individual teachers. Improvements in the way teachers assess pupils work, track their progress and set targets is making sure that pupil progress meetings between teachers and senior leaders are focused on pupils at risk of falling behind so that actions can be taken to help them catch up. However, leaders are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that individual pupils' targets are always challenging, especially for the most able.

Governors are committed to developing their own skills so that they can hold leaders to account for the impact of their work more effectively. They are gaining an increased knowledge of what is going on in school through an improved programme of regular visits. Plans are in place to develop their skills further through training activities and mentoring opportunities for the recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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:

- ensure that individual targets set for pupils are always sufficiently challenging
- refine targets within the school development plan so that leaders, including governors, can more easily measure the impact of the school's work
- ensure the training planned for governors helps them to understand the progress and achievements of pupils, including all groups of pupils across the school so they can challenge leaders fully.

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

## **External support**

The local authority support has been well targeted and effective. Accelerated support and challenge has been well-planned to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in English and mathematics. School leaders are held to account well through regular monitoring visits and challenge meetings chaired by the local authority's head of education, learning and skills.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for South Tyneside and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newcastle and Hexham.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**