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30 January 2013

Mr Paul Towey
Headteacher
Our Lady and St Philomena's Catholic Primary School
Sparrow Hall Road
Liverpool
Merseyside
L9 6BU

Dear Mr Towey

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

Following my visit to your school on 29 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, the inspector held meetings the headteacher and deputy headteacher; and with the subject leaders for English and mathematics. He held meetings with representatives from the local authority, governing body and the diocese. He evaluated the school's post-Ofsted action plan and toured the school on a learning walk.

Context

Since the inspection the governing body appointed an interim headteacher to lead the school for the next two terms.

Main findings

After the inspection, there was a slow start to the improvement in the quality of teaching and leadership. Since the beginning of January and the appointment of an interim headteacher, weaknesses have started to be tackled with a greater sense of urgency. The headteacher has begun to review the staffing structure and has agreed and implemented a new teaching and learning policy. Senior leaders have introduced a new marking policy which staff are beginning to use. It is still too early to determine the impact these actions are having on raising pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, the headteacher has made a

purposeful start on prioritising and acting on what the school needs to do to improve.

The headteacher has also started to make improvements to the classrooms in order to make a better environment for pupils to learn and work in. There is considerable work to be done inside and outside the school before it becomes a more productive environment for learning.

The headteacher has started reviewing the quality of teaching alongside senior leaders. The subject leaders for mathematics and English have written an audit of their subjects identifying the strengths and areas for development. However it is still too early to identify the impact these changes are having on pupil's progress. Senior leaders have written an action plan to tackle the points for improvement mentioned in the inspection report; this is in addition to the existing school development plan. However the action plan fails to indicate measures of success that would enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of the actions they have taken to improve the school. The priorities for improvement within the action plan are lacking in clarity and there is too much repetition. The action plan does not give enough attention to how the school is going to increase pupils' attendance or on how it is going to raise the attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

The governing body has been strengthened by the appointment of a recently retired headteacher. Governors are becoming more involved in what the school does; the headteacher has introduced new weekly meetings with the Chair of Governors. Consequently governors are in a stronger position to challenge the work of the school. Governors are being trained and are developing their leadership skills.

Although the pace of change has quickened since the beginning of January, overall there has not yet been enough impact on accelerating pupils' progress or on raising the quality of teaching.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection because plans are not yet focused enough on bringing about improvement at a more rapid pace. The school should take immediate action to:

- merge the school's development and action plans together. Revise them to make the priorities for improvement clearer, and to make it easier to measure whether the actions have been successful. The plan should include actions to increase pupils' attendance and actions to raise the attainment of pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals
- improve the quality of the classrooms and other rooms to make the school a better place to learn
- introduce an electronic system to track pupils' progress and to track pupils' attainment across the school.

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

External support

Governors and senior leaders have drawn upon the effective support of the local authority and the diocese to appoint an interim headteacher. As a consequence of this good appointment, improvements have accelerated. There is a new committee in place which brings together professionals across the city to oversee the school's improvement. The headteacher has drawn upon the support from the local authority's financial and building services with a view to improving the school further.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector