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28 January 2013

Mrs C Harrison
Headteacher
St Edmunds RC Primary School
Queens Street
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Dear Claire Harrison

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Edmunds RC Primary School on 28 January 2013

Following my visit to your school on 28 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 the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other leaders, members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated, and a range of documentation was reviewed, including documentation about teachers' performance management. The headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school.

Context

Since the inspection there have been no changes in staff. However, one member of staff has resigned and will be leaving the school in February.

Main findings

Leaders and governors accept that the outcomes and priorities from the recent inspection are the right ones. The school has drafted an action plan. However, the plan's overall effectiveness is limited this is because some of the actions detailed are not clear enough to bring about the rapid improvement leaders aspire to and are not linked to precise criteria

against which leaders and governors can measure success. Consequently leaders are not clear enough about what success looks like and need to focus more clearly on the impact their actions need to have in driving improvement.

Although some observations of teaching and learning have taken place, the more positive view of teaching suggested by lesson observations is not reflected in the weaker progress that pupils make. Monitoring information gathered by leaders suggests that agreed actions are not always implemented in all classrooms or followed up consistently.

Performance management documents show that targets related to teachers performance and expectations of pupils' progress need further clarity to ensure that all teachers are clear about the levels of progress required in order to be deemed 'good'.

The governors who met with the inspector did not feel that the report reflected their perception of the governance of the school. However, they did agree that, although they understand their duties and procedures, they are less confident in asking the correct questions and holding the school to account. Further training is needed to ensure that the governing body is clear about what improvements are needed and to improve their skills in asking challenging questions of all leaders to hold them to account more effectively.

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

- secure an accurate overview of the quality and effectiveness of teaching by identifying the strengths and improvements required for individual teachers.
- review the school improvement plan to ensure it contains carefully considered actions and measurable criteria for success to bring about the required improvements.
- access training for the governing body to ensure they have a clear view of the improvement needed and the skills to ask the correct questions of all leaders.
- clarify the roles and expectations of leaders to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for making improvements.

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

External support

The local authority has brokered a range of useful support from subject leaders and practitioners in local schools. However, the school has yet to move on taking up this support and using this expertise to help drive improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

Her Majesty's Inspector