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22 March 2013

Mrs Lynne Murphy
Headteacher
Holy Saviour Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson
Holland Place
Off Reedyford Road
Nelson
Lancashire
BB9 8HD

Dear Mrs Murphy

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Holy Saviour Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson

Following my visit to your school on 21 March 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with yourself and the associate deputy headteacher; a representative of the local authority; and seven members of the governing body. I evaluated the school's plans to improve; senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement; and documents to show how the school had progressed since the inspection.

Context

The governing body advertised, after the inspection, to recruit a headteacher but the application process was unsuccessful. As acting headteacher you are due to continue in your role until September as is the associate deputy headteacher. There have been no changes in staff since the inspection but roles and responsibilities of teachers and senior leaders have changed, mainly because there was no success in appointing a headteacher.

Main findings

The inspection has galvanised staff and governors into action. All are determined to improve quickly for the school to be judged good and then move on to be outstanding.

You have correctly identified the need to improve teaching by focussing on pupils' learning and by increasing pupils' involvement and activity in lessons. The school's records show there are already a few signs of pupils' learning getting better because of better teaching. The changes brought in to the way in which pupils learn to read are having a positive impact and, as a result, pupils' reading in the younger classes is improving well.

Senior leaders monitor teachers' planning weekly and give useful, helpful and supportive advice in helping teachers to plan better. They monitor lessons frequently. After each observation, senior leaders give helpful and precise tips to teachers in how to improve. These are then linked directly to training, coaching, or observing or working alongside other colleagues. Teachers have started using the new system to track pupils' progress and the new system to assess pupils' abilities in reading, writing and mathematics. These are used well in termly meetings with senior leaders. As a result, senior leaders and teachers have a better knowledge of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses; senior leaders have better systems in place to evaluate the quality of what the school does.

Senior leaders have good quality plans for improvement. They are prioritised, make clear the people responsible for taking action, and have clear systems in place to monitor the actions and to evaluate them. There are appropriate actions in the plans, which if implemented well, could bring about the necessary improvements to pupils' learning, the quality of teaching and in leadership.

The governing body has taken effective action to improve its overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors receive honest and increasingly accurate evaluations from yourself and other senior staff. They have responded well to training and external support. Governors' knowledge of data about pupils' achievement has improved as has their knowledge and understanding of how effective the school is. They do not accept data or reports at face value. They question them increasingly incisively to make sure their understanding is accurate and to make sure they can challenge senior leaders to improve the school quickly.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

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

External support

The school is drawing effectively on the support from the local authority. A teaching and learning specialist is working with the school, an expert in the teaching of English, an expert in mathematics and highly experienced and knowledgeable advisors. There are plans in place to support the leadership through working closely with a local headteacher. The authority has helped to review the quality of teaching and has helped with devising plans for improvement.

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

Allan Torr

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.