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14 March 2013

Sr Mary Josepha  
Headteacher  
St Vincent's RC Primary School  
Monkchester Road  
Walker  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Tyne and Wear  
NE6 2TX

Dear Sr Josepha

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Vincent's RC Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 2TX**

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the literacy and numeracy coordinators, a group of pupils, The Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan, governor meeting minutes and the school's assessment records were evaluated.

**Context**

The deputy headteacher is now on maternity leave. Another member of staff has been appointed as acting deputy headteacher in her absence. A supply teacher has joined the school to cover the Reception class. The headteacher has announced to parents and governors that she intends to retire at the end of the summer term 2013.

## **Main Findings**

Governors, senior leaders and staff have recognised that previous expectations of pupils' capabilities have been too low. Actions are now being introduced to establish much higher targets, tackle underachievement and improve teaching.

Additional governors have added well-proven expertise and experience of school improvement to the governing body. Greater challenge and support to senior leaders and staff is already evident. Governors are a visible presence in school through activities such as scrutinising of pupils' work and reviewing the outcomes from teacher assessments. This is enabling governors to better understand school performance and to highlight where improvements are needed.

Senior leaders are taking important steps to tackle underachievement and make improvements to teaching and learning. Regular, unannounced observations of teaching by senior leaders are now an established feature; review meetings are conducted where staff are held accountable for pupils' progress; new assessment procedures are beginning to track pupils' progress more tightly; and bespoke training and support for teachers includes working alongside outstanding practitioners from other schools.

While the school action plan covers the areas for improvement from the inspection, it requires significant revision in a number of important areas so that progress can be checked and individuals held accountable for progress against key priorities.

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:

- ensure that pupil performance targets are precisely defined and are suitably challenging
- ensure that the school action plan is reviewed so that:
  - there is a clear line-of-sight between key priorities and expected outcomes
  - there are clear lines of responsibility so that named staff can be held accountable for leading on specific activities.

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

## **External support**

The local authority has arranged targeted support for leaders and teaching staff from colleagues in high performing schools. This work is proving to be beneficial by providing examples of effective practice and is supporting teachers and leaders to review existing provision and introduce new ideas.

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

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson

**Her Majesty's Inspector**