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Mr Michael Boland
Headteacher
St Lewis Catholic Primary School
Mustard Lane
Croft
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 7BD

Dear Mr Boland

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Lewis Catholic Primary School

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 December 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, the Chair and one other member of the Governing Body and a group of pupils. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority. The school's development plan and monitoring file were also evaluated.

Context

There are no significant changes since the most recent inspection.

Main findings

An effective development plan is in place. This is firmly focused on the key issues which need improving, as identified in the recent Ofsted inspection report. Actions are precise and achievable. The plan is being amended on a regular basis to identify where improvements are happening and what needs to be done further in order that the school gets to good as quickly as possible. There is much greater collective responsibility, a common shared vision and real determination that this will be achieved sooner rather than later.

Strategies are beginning to impact on improving learning and classroom practice. Data is showing that standards are improving and that the pace of this improvement is accelerating. There is better identification of need as monitoring begins to identify underachievement rather than special educational need. Senior management responsibilities have been re-organised to focus more specifically on improving teaching and raising achievement. Pupils are also aware of improvements which are featuring in their lessons. Marking and feedback is more informative and pupils are expected to act on these recommendations. For example, correction of spellings. They feel they are benefitting from this. Work is better suited to individual needs and pupils are being made more aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. They are also being given more opportunities to work independently rather than being directed by the teacher. The school is aware of the need to be more outward looking and build links with other schools and establishments in order to share good practice and learn from success elsewhere. There is a greater involvement at all levels, including middle leaders. There is a clear desire and commitment to make improvements which are secure and make a difference to the pupils. The school is well placed to make good progress in the future.

Governors are firmly committed to ensuring that improvements are fast-tracked and underperformance is challenged. To support this, a special post-Ofsted improvement committee has been established and meets regularly to get feedback from the headteacher and middle leaders on the progress being made. Governors are fully involved in holding management to account. They also have training planned to raise their awareness further of what a good and outstanding school is like.

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:

- continue to improve the quality of pupils' classroom experiences through informative feedback and making sure that pupils act on the advice offered
- ensure that middle leaders monitor outcomes for pupils rigorously through work scrutiny as well as observations in order to identify the progress that pupils are making as well as any gaps in provision
- continue to strengthen middle leadership by making them responsible for developing their subjects by providing appropriate ideas and resources to improve outcomes and enjoyment for pupils
- engage with other schools in the area to observe and share good practice in order to improve provision across the school.

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

External support

The school has, until recently, only received light-touch support from the local authority. Support is now more frequent and focused. Advice offered has been astute and perceptive and has supported potential improvements well. The local authority plans to broker further support as required, especially in sign-posting the school towards good practice in other

schools from which it can learn and develop its own practice. A good partnership is being established.

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

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow

Her Majesty's Inspector