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25 March 2013

Mrs J Walker  
Headteacher  
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School,  
Curbridge Road  
Witney  
Oxfordshire  
OX28 5JZ

Dear Mrs Walker

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Witney**

Following my visit to your school on 25 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, meetings were held with the two acting headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. The school improvement plan and action plans were evaluated. A range of other documents were scrutinised, including current information on pupils' attainment and progress.

**Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, the headteacher continues to be on maternity leave. One teaching assistant resigned and has left the school. One teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract. One teacher is due to begin maternity leave in May. The school becomes a part of a multi-academy company on 1 April 2013.

## **Main findings**

The acting headteachers and the governing body accepted the findings of the inspection, recognising that the areas for improvement are the most important priorities for the school. The school improvement plan has been amended, but further clarity is required to precisely specify the most important actions required to support further improvement, to clarify the timescales for actions, to identify the member of staff responsible for each action and determine governors monitoring arrangements.

Senior leaders acted swiftly to begin to address the areas for improvement. Actions which had already been put in place prior to the inspection are beginning to show impact. The calculation policy is now more consistently applied. New resources to support the teaching of mathematics enable teachers to plan lessons to support the systematic development of pupils' calculation skills. The mathematics subject leader has been instrumental in supporting teachers to plan more opportunities to actively involve pupils during mathematics lessons. Links have been forged with the group of schools which are due to form the multi-academy company in April. These links have enabled teachers to observe outstanding teaching and receive additional support to improve planning in order to devise lessons which are suitably focused on meeting the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Some teachers have received additional support to ensure that lessons are delivered at an appropriate pace and resources are well-organised to support pupils' learning. This aspect of improvement work is at an early stage of development and the impact is not yet fully evident.

Work has begun to review the curriculum, but this is at an early stage of development. Suitable links across a range of subjects are in place, but there is more to be done to ensure pupils' skills are developed systematically in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are generally positive about the improvements since the inspection. They say the work planned is more challenging and enjoyable and there are more opportunities for them to engage in interesting and practical activities such as role play and hot seating.

Senior leaders have taken effective steps to improve the system for tracking and recording the attainment and progress of pupils. Teachers are now able to access the system more readily to record data. This information is providing a clear indication of the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The most recent assessments show that the progress of some, but not all, pupils is beginning to increase more rapidly. There are however, pockets of slower progress in some classes.

Governors are committed to ensure the school rapidly improves. Following the inspection, they issued questionnaires to parents and staff in order to gain a clear understanding of their views and concerns, and to inform their monitoring. Governors recognise that staff stability and the recruitment of high quality teaching

staff are required to ensure the necessary consistency in the quality of teaching, to increase rates of pupil's progress. The expertise of a governor, who specialises in mathematics, is being effectively used to deliver after school mathematics enrichment activities for higher achieving pupils.

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:

- Amend the school improvement plan to include:
  - specific actions to sharpen the focus on how each area for improvement is to be achieved
  - precise timescales and milestones to determine when each action should be achieved
  - the person responsible for implementing the actions
  - the role of governors in monitoring the plan.
- Send the amended school improvement plan to the HMI by the end of May.

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

### **External support**

The school improvement officer (SIO) has provided support to review pupils' progress, set whole school targets and carry out joint lesson observations with the acting headteacher. In addition, the SIO has advised the governing body on the performance appraisal of the acting headteacher. Prior to the inspection, a mathematics advisor provided a range of support to the mathematics subject leader. This level of support has now been reduced and the mathematics subject leader is coaching and supporting teaching staff.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body the Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire, the Diocesan Education Service and the Director of the Multi-Academy Company.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**