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Mrs E Jolly
St Osmund's Catholic Primary School
Exeter Street
Salisbury
SP1 2SG

Dear Mrs Jolly

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

Following my visit to your school on 17 April, 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 headteacher and other senior leaders, three members of the governing body and the school improvement adviser. I also had a telephone conversation with the local authority appointed 'requires improvement lead' for the school. I also appreciated the opportunity to visit some classrooms, to talk with a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils, and to meet four children from the Reception class – I enjoyed their performance. The school action plan was evaluated.

Context

There has been a change in the school improvement adviser since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

- The school's action plan is extremely thorough and detailed, but with a very useful succinct summary of the key points and targets. It covers all of the improvement points in the inspection report, as well as those identified by the headteacher since her appointment last September. The plan is focused well on key improvements in pupils' achievement; other actions and success criteria, including those to improve the quality of teaching, are firmly rooted in raising achievement.
- Challenging and realistic targets are set for improved achievement, including for all groups of pupils. These targets are well-staged for the rest of this school year and for next. Current monitoring data already indicates that the school is on track to achieve this year's targets.
- A new tracking system is being introduced that is intended to provide the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and class teachers with continuous monitoring of pupils' progress and achievement. This is planned well to sharpen interventions where pupils fall behind and to hold everyone to account.
- The headteacher has identified precisely the aspects of teaching that need to be improved or to be more consistently good. This is supported by well-focused professional development, both within the school and through links with an outstanding school within the local authority.
- Some good work has already been implemented. Pupils are becoming much clearer about the 'what, why and how' of their learning and teachers are using this approach to structure their lessons better. Pupils are provided with a really useful set of prompts to use when responding to teachers' questioning. This means that these questions are already being better directed, used much better to build on pupils' responses and to invite other pupils to support or disagree with other's answers. Pupils are developing sophisticated ways of responding: "I partly agree with [name], but I think ..."; "I disagree with [name] because this other example shows a different pattern ...".
- Although pupils' behaviour was judged to be good, the headteacher recognises that pupils tend to learn in a passive way. The school is working on making them much more active learners, such as in the example above.
- Subject leaders are benefitting from targeted support, including through the links with other schools.
- The school's arrangements for the performance management of teachers have been revised to cover the Teachers' Standards, as well include targets for pupils' achievement.
- The school's governors have responded well to the inspection report. They now clearly recognise what the school needs to do to improve. They have already undertaken training to help them provide a better balance of support and challenge for the headteacher.
- A good example of the governing body's sharper focus is the way they plan to monitor financial investment, including funding to support students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority, those eligible for free school meals and

children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces), through its impact on pupils' achievement.

- The local authority is undertaking a review of governance; a skills audit has already been completed. The training governors have received in how to analysis pupil performance data is already helping them to ask more challenging questions of the headteacher.

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 recommends that:

- the school (as far as possible: the headteacher, senior/middle leaders, governors and the school improvement adviser) attends an Ofsted 'Getting to good' seminar
- a further monitoring visit should focus on supporting subject leaders.

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

External support

The school is receiving high-quality external support. The local authority has appointed a 'requires improvement' lead to work with the school to undertake frequent case conferences and visits to monitor progress. There has also been a change in the school improvement adviser. Both the 'lead' and the adviser are headteachers in outstanding local primary schools. This support reassured the headteacher, and the governing body, that the key priorities for improvement had been identified and appropriate actions put in place. The school also has close links with another outstanding primary school within the authority and this has been used, for example, to provide 'outstanding teacher' training that is already having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Governors have received good training in a range of aspects of their work. The local authority has provided the school with additional funding to support some of the actions required.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire Local Authority and the Director for Schools and Colleges for the Clifton Diocese.

Yours sincerely

James Sage

Her Majesty's Inspector