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24 May 2013

Mr Peter Moore
Headteacher
St Edward's RC School
Rowland Way
Lees
Oldham
Lancashire
OL4 3LQ

Dear Mr Moore

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Edward's RC School, Oldham

Following my visit to your school on 23 May 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. I evaluated the school action plan and scrutinised other key documentation. I also had the opportunity to accompany you on a tour of the school.

Context

There have been no changes to staffing since the previous inspection.

Main findings

The school's action plan, which has been written in response to the recent inspection, focuses closely on the areas for improvement which were highlighted. It gives a detailed account of intended actions but it is not clear who will be monitoring these and how the impact of these actions will be evaluated in the short and long term.

In the weeks following the inspection, you and your team have been keen to learn from the good and outstanding practice of others in order to improve your own school. The training sessions led by an external consultant, coupled with your raised expectations of all staff have already had impact. The number of staff who teach consistently good lessons has increased since the last inspection. Pupils spoken to have noticed a difference in their lessons. They said they are enjoying their learning more because of the activities which some teachers are using. They said teachers are talking less and they are being given more opportunities for discussion in pairs and groups.

In order to raise achievement, you have made it clear to all staff that if pupils only make expected progress, this is not good enough. There are increased expectations for all groups of pupils based on them making the best possible progress. The focus on writing has already had impact with pupils achieving higher levels in Year 6 and Year 2.

The reorganisation of the senior leadership team means there are now effective lines of responsibility, although these need to be more clearly linked to the school action plan. Since the last inspection, you are monitoring the quality of teaching more tightly, and you have used the expertise of other headteachers to ensure that your lesson observation judgements are robust. You now expect all planning to show how the work will match the different abilities of all pupils, but some teachers are doing this more effectively than others.

The governing body is rising to the challenge of the recent inspection judgement. They now want to gather as much information as possible in order to be able to support and challenge leaders in school more effectively. The new standards committee is enabling them to 'dig deeper' than they have previously done on pupil achievement and quality of teaching.

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:

- sharpen the school action plan so that leaders can measure and evaluate the impact of their actions at regular intervals
- continue to look outward for examples of good and outstanding practice, but then make any new procedures and initiatives appropriate for St Edward's
- ensure that all staff follow the new planning and marking procedures.

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

External support

The local authority is now effectively supporting the school. The school performance officer has been working closely with leaders in school to plan how they will address the key issues from the recent inspection. She is brokering leadership support through a National Leader of Education and National Leader of Governance. The local authority is also funding places on the Improving Teacher programme for two members of staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.