

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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5 June 2013

Damien McGarrigle
Headteacher
Maryvale Catholic Primary School
Old Oscott Hill
Kingstanding
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Dear Mr McGarrigle

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Maryvale Catholic Primary School, Birmingham

Following my visit to your school on 4 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. I also met with a National Leader in Education who has been providing you, other senior leaders and teachers with support. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including feedback to teachers following reviews of pupils' work and lesson observations, information about pupils' achievement, and the headteacher's report to the governing body. During this visit, you joined me on brief visits to some lessons to talk to pupils and review their work.

Context

You will be leaving at the end of this term. The governing body has appointed a new headteacher who will join the school in September 2013. Since the previous inspection, three class teachers have left the school. Three new teachers have been appointed and they will also start working at the school in September.

Main findings

You, together with other senior leaders are not responding to weaknesses in pupils' progress with sufficient urgency. The latest information shows that across the school, pupils and especially boys continue to make inadequate progress in reading and writing. This information also shows that boys in Year 3 are not making enough progress in mathematics.

The systems for checking the work of staff are not rigorous. When observing teachers and reviewing pupils' work, you and other senior leaders do not focus enough on the impact teachers are having on different groups of pupils' learning. This is leading to an over generous view of the quality of teaching in the school.

Teachers are beginning to give pupils the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills through more practical and interesting activities. Teachers are also starting to give pupils the chance to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. While these are positive developments, they are not leading to rapid improvements in pupils' progress. This is because teachers often ask pupils of different abilities to complete the same mathematical activity. Consequently, the work for more-able pupils is too easy and too difficult for those who need extra help.

Governors meet regularly to discuss the progress of pupils. However, the information they receive from you and other senior leaders is not detailed enough. This prevents them from asking searching questions about the progress of different groups of pupils and to check that senior leaders are helping all pupils make better progress.

The school improvement plan clearly indicates how pupils will be helped to make quicker progress in mathematics. It does not identify the specific actions that will be taken to help pupils, and especially boys make faster progress in reading and writing. The plan does not have enough measurable success criteria. Neither does the plan state who will check that the intended actions are making enough of a difference to pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- work with the local authority and the National Leader in Education to ensure existing senior leaders and those that will be joining the school take urgent action to ensure all pupils make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that governors receive information about the progress made by different groups of pupils so that they can check the impact senior leaders and teachers are having on pupils' achievement

- ensure the school improvement plan identifies the actions that will be taken to raise boys' achievement in reading and writing, it contains measureable success criteria and it clearly states who will evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the plan.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I would like to meet with the full governing body as soon as possible to discuss the findings from this visit.

External support

Prior to the recent inspection, the local authority shared with the Chair of the Governing Body its concerns about senior leaders and their ability to make the required changes in the school. You and other senior leaders were subsequently provided with a range of intensive support. Local authority advisers and the National Leader in Education have provided you, other senior leaders and teachers with helpful support and advice. Teachers have also had the opportunity to visit other schools and observe effective practice. The impact of this work has been limited because senior leaders have not always followed the advice or made sure that all teachers have consistently implemented the actions required to help pupils make faster progress. The local authority will be organising a review of governance and providing governors with further training next term. In order to help the school move quickly towards good, I recommend that the local authority carries out a full review of pupils' learning, the quality of teaching and leadership and management before the end of October 2013.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector