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Mrs Jackie Watkins
Acting headteacher
Shrewsbury Cathedral Catholic Primary School
New Park Road
Castlefields
Shrewsbury
SY1 2SP

Dear Mrs Watkins

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shrewsbury Cathedral Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the acting assistant headteacher, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I made brief visits to lessons in all classes and looked at a small sample of pupils' work. I also evaluated the school improvement plans.

Context

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has been absent through illness and will leave the school at the end of this term. During this time, the deputy headteacher has led and managed the school as acting headteacher. She has now been appointed as substantive headteacher and will formally start in this role at the beginning of next term.

Main findings

Since being appointed as acting headteacher, you have ensured that plans for improvement are in place and are being acted upon. However, the timing of the planned actions do not reflect the urgency to improve pupils' achievement rapidly and they do not have regular short-term checks so that you, other leaders and the governing body can be sure that pupils are making rapid progress.

You have revised the system for tracking pupils' progress and ensured that teachers now understand how the data can be used to measure pupils' progress and identify pupils who are underachieving. This is an important step forward and means that the achievement information is now used more effectively by all staff to improve pupils' learning. The next step is for you, other leaders and the governors to analyse the information more closely so that you all have a good understanding of the achievement of the different groups of pupils, such as those who speak English as an additional language, the more-able and less-able pupils and those who are supported by pupil premium funding. This will enable you and the governors to focus your resources on groups of pupils which are most in need and track their progress.

You have continued to develop your monitoring and evaluating skills by undertaking joint lesson observations with a local authority representative. As you know, your skills in this area are at the early stages of development and you and other senior leaders need further training so that you can help teachers improve their teaching skills.

The governors are aware that, due to other school issues needing their time and attention, they have not ensured that improvements to their own skills and knowledge have been fast enough since the last inspection. Although they have made application for a review of governance, nothing has yet started and governors have not received training to improve their skills of how to monitor and evaluate the school's work and effectively hold its leaders to account.

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 ensure that:

- the plans for improvement are sharply focused on bringing about rapid improvement and show regular short-term checks on pupils' achievement.
- the planned review of governance is undertaken as a matter of urgency
- the assessment information is analysed to show the achievement of all different groups in the school
- the current acting headteacher develops her skills of monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement, especially through lesson observations

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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

It is essential that you regularly keep me informed of further developments. As agreed, I will supplement the support from the local authority by arranging some training in lesson observations and look to provide you with a personal mentor.

External support

The local authority has organised support from a local leader of education, has given teaching and leadership support through a mathematics consultant and has plans to undertake a review of governance. The local authority now needs to ensure that the school's leaders and governing body fully develop their leadership and management skills, and improvements are driven at a faster pace.

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

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector