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5 July 2013

Mrs Jo Ayres  
Headteacher  
St Alban's Catholic Primary School  
Wadworth Street  
Denaby Main  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN12 4AQ

Dear Mrs Ayres

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Doncaster**

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a consultant working with the school to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan and a number of other documents provided by the school were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a tour of the school.

**Context**

In September 2013 the school will be fully staffed with permanent teachers for the first time in several years. A new deputy headteacher will also start at the school.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection the headteacher supported by the leadership team, governors and the local authority has been quick to begin to tackle the areas for improvement. The action plan addresses the key areas with suitable actions. The plan needs to be improved to make it clear when actions will happen, and what impact they will have on pupil progress.

Teachers whose teaching is not yet good have individual programmes of support and are working with the local teaching alliance and sharing the good practice of their colleagues in school. Early indications are that this work is improving the quality of teaching. Two teachers will begin an outstanding teacher's programme in September 2013. Monitoring by the local authority representative validates improvements in teaching and learning and in the learning environment since the inspection.

The school has introduced new planning sheets which encourage differentiation so that work provides an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, including the most able. The planning is also used to evaluate learning at the end of each lesson so that future work is appropriate for every pupil. This system has been monitored, evaluated and improved in consultation with staff.

Marking and feedback practices are being developed which tell pupils what they are doing well and how to improve. The policy will be reviewed and developed and needs to be thoroughly embedded and used consistently. The school will also use 'Achievement for All', a system which develops teacher's skills in sharing learning with parents.

The curriculum is improving. The senior leader with responsibility for the curriculum is working with a consultant and a new thematic cross-curricular approach is providing highly creative and imaginative learning experiences. The theme during this visit was 'Humpty Dumpty'. Pupils were seen writing, measuring, experimenting, cooking and using physical education to explore the topic which they were thoroughly enjoying. The literacy and numeracy schemes are now embedded in the school's work.

Developing data systems are beginning to help staff to identify pupils who are not making enough progress. The new deputy headteacher has designed class dashboards which will support this. Staff now need to strengthen their skills in the use of data to ensure that all pupils make good progress and interventions are well matched to their needs.

The return to a permanent staffing structure has allowed the appointment of leaders for English and mathematics. Senior leaders also have responsibility for the curriculum and inclusion. All recognise the hard work of the headteacher in managing a time of staffing turbulence and in responding rapidly to the areas for improvement.

An external review of governance is underway supported by the local authority, the diocese and a National Leader of Governance. The governors have responded energetically to the areas for improvement by setting up a review group and understanding the action plan. They now need to monitor the action plan. Another group of governors has firmly grasped the nettle to deliver a much more effective and rigorous governance structure.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- refine the action plan so it is clear when actions will be completed and how it links to pupil progress
- embed the new planning, marking and feedback policies so that they are used consistently
- continue to develop the curriculum to increase pace, engagement and cross-curricular working
- make better use of data to track pupil progress and to make sure that all pupils make good progress
- ensure that governors monitor the impact of the action plan at regular points so that they are confident that pupils are making good progress.

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

### **External support**

The school has effective support to improve teaching and the curriculum from the local teaching alliance and a consultant. A National Leader of Governance is working with the governing body. The local authority knows the school well and has provided considerable support and challenge for school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

**Her Majesty's Inspector**