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9 July 2013

Mr P Storey
Headteacher
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Sandy Lane
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN4 5EP

Dear Mr Storey

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

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

Evidence

During my visit, I held meetings with you and an assistant headteacher, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement and action plans. You accompanied me on a series of brief visits to lesson. I also looked at minutes of meetings and the written feedback to teachers following lesson observations.

Main findings

Along with senior staff and members of the governing body, you have grasped the nettle and taken the first steps on the school's journey to becoming a good school. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the way the school tracks the progress made by pupils. They have set challenging targets for pupils attainment and this is helping to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Teachers have improved their planning and now identify any individual child who needs extra help. Leaders have planned further training to make sure work set by teachers consistently meets the needs of each pupil. Inadequate teaching is being tackled through a package of support for teachers along with clear expectations about the improvements leaders expect to see.

The school's improvement and action plans are focussed on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders have identified points in time when they will check on how successful their actions have been. However, it is not clear about what they expect to see at these interim points and this makes it difficult for governors, leaders and external partners to judge the effectiveness of the work.

Leaders are now linking the information they have about the quality of teaching with the progress made by pupils and this is establishing a more precise picture of the impact teaching is having on pupils' learning overtime. However, the written feedback teachers get following a lesson observation is not as crisp in connecting these two elements. Leaders have sound plans to routinely involve middle leaders in checking on the quality of work in their areas of responsibility. These plans are still in the early stages of development and have not had a noticeable effect on impact on accelerating improvements.

Governors continue to refine the way they hold the school to account. They regularly visit the school to see for themselves how things are improving. They have further plans to make sure future visits are tied firmly to checking on the success of leaders' actions in improving the school. Leaders, governors, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher from a partner school meet regularly to check on the progress the school is making. This will provide a useful way of making sure everybody maintains high expectations and, most importantly, that the rate of improvement is rapid and sustained.

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:

- Make sure leaders, governors and external partners know exactly what to look for when they are checking on the impact of the school's work.
- Keep a close eye on making sure improvements are rapid and sustained through the regular checks by governors and external partners.
- Accelerate the development of middle leaders' skills in contributing to improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

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 is making effective use of external support. The local authority has developed a helpful plan of action and a representative visits regularly to provide the headteacher with practical support and robust challenge. This is helping leaders to improve the quality of the feedback teachers get about their practice. Governors have valued additional training from the local authority in improving the quality of their work. The Diocese of Hallam has put the school in touch with a good school nearby. Leaders are working well with this new partner to improve teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector