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16 July 2013

Miss Kathryn Leonard  
Headteacher  
St Anne's Catholic Primary School  
Off Pickering Green  
Harlow Green  
Gateshead  
Tyne and Wear  
NE9 7HX

Dear Miss Leonard

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Gateshead**

Following my visit to your school on 15 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. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, seven members of the governing body and a representative from Gateshead Council's school improvement service. I reviewed the post Ofsted improvement plan, recent reports to governors and information on pupils' current levels of attainment and progress across the school. I also jointly observed two part-lessons with you and looked at pupils books in those lessons.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes in the school's organisation since the inspection.

### **Main findings**

You acted swiftly to develop and implement an action plan with staff and governors to improve attendance, teaching and hasten pupils' progress. Working with governors and the school improvement service, you are refining the plans to make sure that only important actions are identified and targets extended beyond Year 6 to include targets for pupils in all classes and different groups of pupils to make sure all teachers are held to account for their pupils' achievements. Determined actions taken are starting to drive improvement.

Evidence from your monitoring and from my discussions, lesson observations, and scrutiny of pupils' books during the visit indicate the quality of teaching is improving and teachers are marking books regularly in English and mathematics. Teachers' feedback is usually informative, identifying what pupils are doing well and what they need to do next. You know more needs to be done to make sure teachers give pupils time to respond to comments. You also know that teaching needs further improvement in Key Stage 2. Building on the opportunities teachers have already had to share good practice in school and observe outstanding teaching in outstanding schools locally, you intend to increase this work in September. You quickly extended the role of middle leaders and they are now involved in weekly monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning. They are beginning to be more involved in observing the quality of teaching and pupil progress interviews with staff. This is starting to hold them to account more formally for their work and that of other staff. In order to develop middle leadership further you have planned specific middle leaders training for next term and secured support from a number of local schools. Performance management arrangements were changed immediately after the inspection. Targets have been sharpened and reviews moved from half-yearly to termly so that progress towards individual teacher targets can be checked more robustly. Support, training and coaching has been provided for teachers whose teaching requires improvement but formal time-limited plans for teachers whose teaching is not yet consistently good are not yet in place.

Governors worked quickly to improve their role in holding you and the rest of the team to account for the achievements of pupils. They are more involved in monitoring the work of the school first hand and require detailed and regular information about pupils' progress across the school. They recognised the need to strengthen middle leadership and are restructuring and increasing the team. Actions already taken will be enhanced by their imminent development of a school improvement committee which will take a lead in regularly monitoring the progress of pupils, including groups of pupils, and the quality of teaching. Monthly steering group meetings set up by Gateshead's senior school improvement officers will provide governors with more evidence of how you are tackling the areas identified for improvement at the time of the inspection.

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:

- develop short-term plans for teachers whose teaching requires improvement, by September, to ensure that actions are making a positive difference to the quality of teaching and to take urgent action when this is not the case.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will provide information to you on Ofsted's Better English and Mathematics Seminar so that you and key members of the team can attend. I will come to the school next term to check on improvements in the quality of teaching and work with the governing body on reviewing pupil progress data.

## **External support**

Following the inspection, the local authority provided timely support through increased adviser and consultant time and through the development of steering group meetings. They have brokered effective school-to-school support with an outstanding local school, Caedmon primary school, which has helped teachers to improve the quality of marking and feedback in pupils' books. Your links with leaders from outstanding local Catholic primary schools like Corpus Christi school are helping you improve the leadership skills of middle managers. Links developed with St Peter's Catholic primary and St Joseph's infants' schools are enabling teachers to see and learn from outstanding teaching, planning and assessment.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**