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3 December 2013

Mrs Anne Ostmeier  
Headteacher  
St Anne's RC Primary School  
Greenacres Road  
Oldham  
Lancashire  
OL4 1HP

Dear Mrs Ostmeier

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

Following my visit to your school on 2 December 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 October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- Further refine the school improvement plan. Give specific detail of what success will look like for each action and ensure that all staff can make a positive contribution.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, teachers, students, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated along with other information presented by the school including a report, produced by external consultants, on how effectively the school is progressing. I also looked at pupils' work and took the opportunity to visit classrooms in order to observe learning.

## Context

There have been two changes to the staff team since the inspection. One member of staff has changed her working hours to become a part-time member of staff. A new teacher has been employed on a part-time basis.

## Main findings

Leaders have set a fast pace for change. Securing consistently high quality teaching across the school is a top priority. Senior leaders and governors have embraced the challenge to move the school to good in as short a time as possible and this is reflected in the actions identified in the school improvement plan. The improvement plan gives a precise series of actions to move the school forward. However, a few aspects of the plan are not sharp enough and do not show clearly how the impact of actions can be measured accurately.

Senior leaders have taken decisive action to gain some quick wins. For example, leaders have encouraged teachers to share good practice so that they all know how to make the start of their lessons more engaging for pupils. Senior leaders regularly monitor the start of lessons, as a consequence teachers ensure that pupils are actively engaged in learning and making progress from the beginning of every lesson.

Middle leaders have acted quickly and effectively to improve the quality of teachers' marking. Teachers' meetings, led by middle leaders, have been used to identify how marking can be used to accelerate and support the rate of pupils' progress. The comments made by teachers in pupils' work books are now effectively linked to individual pupils' improvement targets which themselves are clearly visible on the inside cover of pupils' work books. Pupils often return to their work books, read any comments made by the teacher and make corrections or answer additional questions posed for them. This additional challenge is increasing the rate of progress made by all pupils.

Extending pupils' limited vocabulary is quite rightly seen as a key to unlocking their potential in all subjects. Leaders have acted swiftly to ensure every opportunity is taken to challenge pupils to increase their knowledge and use of ever more interesting and complex words. Teachers have received coaching from highly skilled leaders in how to develop pupils' understanding and use of a wider repertoire of words. Teachers organise lessons to allow time for pupils to find out new words and use them in their work. Group reading lessons are used to allow pupils to discuss and develop their understanding of challenging words rather than just read them. Classrooms and corridors abound with pupils' examples of complex words and how they have used these words in sentences. As a result pupils' writing in their work books is much more interesting and varied, often accurately using words they have never used before. It is clear that this action has increased the rate of progress being made by pupils, particularly in their reading and writing.

Governors have taken prompt action to improve their skills in gathering, analysing and interpreting information about pupils' attainment and progress. All governors have taken part in training, provided by the local authority, designed to increase governors' understanding of published data about pupils' attainment and progress. A number of governors have become 'Governor Champions' with in school, focussing on one aspect of the school improvement plan and have already started to challenge leaders around aspects of teachers' planning and the effective use of group reading sessions. Governors have also commissioned an external review of governance in order to ensure their own expertise can be used to best effect in order to rapidly raise standards. It is too early to judge the impact of governors' actions on the rate of progress being made by pupils in the school.

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**

Leaders have taken effective action to secure support from external consultants. This has already resulted in training for middle leaders and has supported senior leaders in improving their analysis of data about pupils' attainment and progress. The local authority has continued to support the school and plans are in place to provide quality assurance visits every half-term. The local authority has also effectively supported the school in identifying a local outstanding school with which to share good practice and develop leadership capacity. Although some actions, such as additional training for middle leaders have already impacted positively on the rate of progress being made by pupils, it is too early to judge the impact of the use of external support on overall achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Drew Crawshaw  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**