

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

5 December 2013

Ms Natasha Scott  
The Headteacher  
St Francis' Catholic Primary School  
Maryland Park  
London  
E15 1HB

Dear Ms Scott

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St Francis' Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit with Gill Bosschaert, Additional Inspector, to your school on 3 and 4 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures. The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Newham and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood.

Yours sincerely

Jane Wotherspoon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2013**

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' attainment by:
  - ensuring teachers have higher expectations and set work which matches pupils' different learning needs
  - making sure teachers talk less in lessons and provide more opportunities for pupils to work by themselves so that they remain involved in their work and behaviour improves
  - ensuring lessons move at a brisk pace and that more-able pupils are suitably challenged to reach higher levels of attainment
  - encouraging more-able pupils in Years 5 and 6 to read more challenging texts ensuring that reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively across the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - making sure all leaders, especially subject leaders, have the necessary skills to check on pupils' progress and know what needs to be improved and how to hold teachers to account
  - making sure that the school's policies for marking and managing behaviour are implemented consistently
  - ensuring there are systems to accurately measure pupils' progress, and that these are used to highlight how different groups and individuals are achieving, and to promote rapid improvements
  - developing plans for improvement with suitable timescales and clear criteria against which success can be measured
  - fully implementing procedures for managing the performance of staff so that teaching becomes securely good for all pupils
  - strengthening systems for engaging with parents and carers so they express greater confidence in the school
  - ensuring the governing body is able to perform its duties effectively and, in particular, to hold leaders to account more rigorously.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2013**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior staff with leadership responsibility, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with staff and pupils during the course of the inspection.

### **Context**

There have been some significant changes in staffing. From September the new substantive headteacher took up her post and an assistant headteacher and a senior teacher have been added to the senior leadership team. In addition, three class teachers joined the school, including two who are new to teaching. The school also has a new site supervisor. The governing body has been reorganised following the election of a new Chair and Vice Chair.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Results in tests and assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the summer term were broadly similar to the national figures for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. However, there were some variations between the subjects and marked differences in the attainment of different groups of pupils. For example, at the end of Year 2, English speakers were on average two terms ahead in reading and writing of pupils who do not speak English as their first language. Pupils in Year 6 did much better in writing than in reading – a reversal of the national picture. Boys did less well than girls in all respects. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives pupil premium funding did not do as well as other pupils in the school; on average they left Year 6 almost a year behind their classmates with the biggest gap in mathematics.

Assessments of children at the end of the Reception Year show that many did not reach the levels expected for their age. Only about a quarter of pupils started Year 1 with the skills in reading, writing and mathematics that they need. They have much to catch up. Boys' results were especially low. Two things are happening in response to these poor results: pupils now in Year 1 have extra support and a structured programme has been introduced in the Reception Year to develop children's skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The school's own information about pupils' attainment shows that some pupils have a lot of ground to make up to reach the levels expected for their age. Although the school has a stronger system to track pupils' progress from year to year, concerns over the accuracy of teachers' assessment in the summer makes it harder for the school to demonstrate the progress pupils are making this term. An evaluation of

pupils' progress will be a key focus for the next monitoring inspection in the spring term.

In lessons, pupils' progress was linked to the quality of teaching. Where pupils are set by ability, the activities teachers provide are not always sufficiently different to challenge the more-able pupils, who mark time. Pupils' written work often contains errors of grammar and punctuation, as well as spelling mistakes. At times, the pace of pupils' work is too slow so that pupils complete too little in the time available.

### **The quality of teaching**

Monitoring of teachers' lesson planning by senior leaders has ensured that all teachers follow the revised format and include the required elements. Planning is frequently detailed, and teachers identify different groups of pupils that may need support or challenge. However, such planning does not always translate into successful learning for pupils. This may be for one of several reasons: not enough is demanded of pupils so they do not always work quickly enough; the challenge for more-able pupils is not always strong enough; pupils sometimes spend too long doing whole-class activities and do not have enough time to follow up on their teacher's input; and the pace drops as teachers talk too much about success criteria.

By and large, teachers' explanations are clear and, in the best examples, expectations are high so that much is expected of pupils. Here, teachers use pupils' work as an example of what is expected and to reinforce teaching points. Where time is well spent discussing pupils' targets, and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own work, they have a sense of their own achievement that boosts their self-esteem. Displays around the school are bright and welcoming, giving a sense of expectation of pupils' work, but book corners that promote the love of reading are not high profile in every classroom. Relationships are generally warm and respectful.

The agreed system for marking pupils' work is followed consistently. However, teachers often ask a question or make a suggestion that is not followed up by pupils. At times, teachers mark to the success criteria for the lesson and do not pick up other errors in pupils' work. Whilst inspectors saw a good example of a pupil being given a new target which came directly from marking their work, such practice is not widespread. The quality of teachers' handwriting and spelling is not always a good model.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes), planning for the sessions that adults lead has a clear focus, but this is not the case for those activities that children choose for themselves. Staff are not always clear what children are expected to learn at these times and so adults miss opportunities to intervene to develop children's language and vocabulary. Boys, in particular, are not always guided to take part in the wide range of activities available. The quality of planning and assessment is not checked rigorously enough. This means that, in practice, there are wide inconsistencies in the quality, quantity and regularity of observations of each child's learning to provide a picture of the progress the children

make. In turn, this results in a weak foundation for planning appropriate activities to meet their needs.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In lessons, pupils are compliant and most listen and are attentive to teachers' instructions. However, they are not always eager and switched on to learning. Occasionally pupils switch off, depending on the way the work is presented to them. Generally, pupils' work is neat.

Pupils' conduct around the school is orderly. Playtime is boisterous and pupils are active, but most cope with the restricted space during the programme of refurbishment of the playground. There have been no exclusions since the last monitoring inspection. Attendance figures are higher than average.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The new headteacher is building well on the start made by the acting co-headteachers. She gives staff clear leadership and sets them high expectations. The leadership team has been strengthened with additional staff to bolster the school's capacity to improve. Staff who have responsibility for leading a phase of the school and/or for leading subject developments are clear about the expectations of them. They know they will be held accountable for improvements in aspects of the school's work. They understand the issues around pupils' achievement and have relevant plans to improve pupils' progress. Their role in checking the quality of provision, including undertaking lesson observations, is increasing. At present, observations focus too much on what the teacher does rather than on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

The system for tracking pupils' progress has improved. Linked to meetings in which teachers discuss the progress of each pupil with the phase leader and headteacher, the information is a helpful reminder for teachers of their accountability to improve pupils' progress. These meetings help to identify those pupils that need to make more progress and result in a clear plan of action for specific groups of pupils.

The school's action plan has been updated this term to reflect changing priorities, roles and responsibilities. The school's leaders are proactive in seeking support and making good use of a wide range of guidance and advice from different sources to support the actions in the plan. The headteacher's commentary on the actions taken so far does not focus enough on the 'impact' of the actions. Although the new plan gives governors a role in checking the school's work, such a role is yet to be realised in practice. The proposal to create a small group of governors to review the action plan regularly with the headteacher is a sensible one.

A reshuffle of the governing body with a new Chair and Vice Chair is creating more capacity to improve governance. Many governors are attending training to help them become more effective. A review of governance is well under way, but the findings

are yet to be reported. Governors receive detailed information from the headteacher, which enables them to ask more searching questions. Given the weak outcomes of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, governors should focus particularly on the school's actions to improve the achievement of this group of pupils. Plans to establish a structured programme of visits by governors to the school are at an early stage.

### **External support**

Regular meetings with the local authority's link adviser provide the headteacher with helpful opportunities to discuss the quality of teaching as well as a range of general matters. The local authority has also supported the school with funds to improve the playground and to increase resources. The impact of external support can be seen most in the developing role of phase leaders and subject leaders and in the way that governors are beginning to extend their role. The impact of support for individual teachers can be seen in practice that is improving. Further support is required for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage.