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28 November 2013

Mrs E Jolly
Headteacher
St Osmund's Catholic Primary School
Exeter Street
Salisbury
SP1 2SG

Dear Mrs Jolly

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Following my visit to your school on 28 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. I agreed that I would send you a brief summary of my findings following the visit.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff and members of the governing body. In these meetings we discussed the impact of the actions the school has taken and data about pupils' progress and achievement. I also undertook lesson observations of all classes – eight observations in total – covering mainly literacy and mathematics. These were joint observations with yourself or other leaders. For four teachers, I observed the feedback to the teacher about the lesson.

Context

There have been a number of changes in staffing since my previous visit, including three new teachers and some changes to subject leadership.

Main findings

- The headteacher, supported well by other key staff, is driving the school to improve at a good pace. Where rapid gains can be made, they are, and have been; where the pace needs to be more measured, it is.
- Governors are much sharper in undertaking independent analysis of, for example, data on pupils' achievement. This enables them to provide you with effective support and challenge – they know the hard questions to ask!
- Data on the Year 6 cohort who completed in July 2013 show that pupils' overall achievement improved on previous years and challenging targets were met. There were some gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils; for example, between boys and girls and between those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those who were not. While these are largely explained by the nature of the individual children, you are fully aware that these gaps need to be closed and have already taken appropriate actions - these are having a positive impact.
- The overall quality of teaching has improved such that much is outstanding - four of the lessons observed during my visit were outstanding - and almost all of the teaching is at least good. You have identified clearly what is needed to raise the quality further and this agrees exactly with my observations.
- The best teaching is lively and engaging, fast paced and matched well to the pupils so that they work with clear enjoyment. Questioning is used well to involve all pupils in discussion and debate, and to develop their reasoning skills, such as in mathematics. Learning is now much more active than I observed on my earlier visit in April 2013.
- The school's marking scheme is used consistently well, although in some cases, teachers need to check that the pupils' 'next steps' have been acted on and their work improves. Sometimes the pupils need to be given time to think about these points and to do what is required.
- A rigorous system is now used to monitor individual pupil's progress and this is being used well. It also enables you and other leaders to track the progress of each class and different groups of pupils. Teachers are also using it well to identify what pupils can do well and where they need additional teaching or support.
- Pupils' behaviour is almost always at least good and often exemplary. Where it was tending to be less good, it was largely due to the teaching and activities not interesting them enough to hold their attention. I saw some lovely examples of pupils helping each other, sometimes managed by the teacher but often initiated by them.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire Local Authority and the Director for Schools and Colleges for the Clifton Diocese.

Yours sincerely

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector