

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

17 December 2013

Mr. Brendan Gill
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Chapel Street
Devonport
Plymouth
Devon
PL1 4DJ

Dear Mr. Gill,

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 September 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:

- Identify within the school improvement plan a regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation so that the impact of the work of the school can be effectively monitored by the governing body so that they might hold the school more rigorously to account.
- Ensure furniture and equipment is stored appropriate so that it does not inhibit the learning environment for pupils.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, representative of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a Diocesan support consultant to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke briefly and informally with some older pupils. The school improvement plan was also evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection in September 2013 a new governing body has been formed. The school will become part of a multi-academy trust in the spring term 2014.

Main findings

The school improvement plan requires further work before it is fit for purpose. Although senior leaders know the needs of pupils well the system to monitor their progress and overall achievements does not provide senior leaders or governors with the regular and detailed information they require to hold the school effectively to account.

Senior leaders say they are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Since the inspection they have put plans in place to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that remain within the school. For example, teachers have received training aimed at improving their mathematical skills and they have begun to review the quality of their marking of pupils' books. Similarly, the leader responsible for special educational needs has introduced a comprehensive system to monitor and evaluate the progress of those pupils who are disabled, have special educational needs or require additional support.

The school has undergone considerable renovations and additional building work in recent months in order to accommodate a planned increase to pupil numbers. However, this has resulted in some teaching areas of the school being left in an unsuitable and unusable state for too long and this is impacting negatively on the overall quality of the learning environment.

External support

The newly formed governing body is taking advantage of the wide range of support offered by the local authority and the Diocese. Governors have received training to better understand school data and to ensure safeguarding arrangements are fully in place. They are continuing to access a range of training and development opportunities in order to equip themselves with the necessary skills to hold the school robustly to account. Where some pupils have not made the progress expected the school continues to work closely with external partners and other agencies to strengthen the provision for the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Plymouth and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector