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11 December 2013

Mr Richard Sanderson
Headteacher
St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School and Nursery
Poulton Road
Fleetwood
Lancashire
FY7 7JY

Dear Mr Sanderson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 10 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. Leaders should take further action to:

- revise the school improvement plan so that intended successes in terms of outcomes for pupils are quantified
- ensure checks on the success of actions occur at more regular points during each term
- ensure observations of teaching and learning undertaken by senior leaders always articulate how teaching has made a difference to the learning of pupils.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, your newly formed senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, and representatives of the local authority and the diocese. The school improvement plans were evaluated and a number of lesson observation records scrutinised. I also toured the school.

Main findings

The outcome of the October section 5 inspection came as no surprise to you as headteacher or to the Chair of the Governing Body. This is because, since your arrival at the school in September 2012, you have identified the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. The improvement plans you have put into place are rightly seen by senior leaders, governors, diocese and local authority as the correct ones for the school. However, as we discussed, the plans do not always quantify the successes you intend for pupils.

Your new senior leadership team is taking increased responsibility for implementing the improvement plans. Some successes are evident already. For example, all pupils bar one in Year 6 have made at least expected progress in mathematics from their starting points in September 2013. However, as we agreed, the checking of the success of actions taken is not as regular as it should be. Some senior leaders have left the checking of signs of success or otherwise until now. This is too late in the day should issues arise that could have been addressed earlier in the term.

As you are acting with urgency, so too is the governing body. Already, more probing questions are being asked about the gap between pupils for whom the pupil premium is intended and other pupils. The first stage of the review of governance – as recommended by the October 2013 inspection - is scheduled for mid-December 2013.

External support

To support the school in raising standards the local authority has provided additional funding. Governors, the local authority and the diocese are keenly aware that, because of the newness of the senior leadership team, much is falling on your shoulders as headteacher. To this end, the local authority is to provide training for the senior leadership team in order to equip them to make wholly accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning so that observation records always articulate how teaching has made a difference to the learning of pupils. This training has the potential of increasing leadership capacity within the school further.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to 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 Lancashire and to the Catholic Diocese of Lancaster.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector