

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

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

Direct T: 0121 679 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



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Ann-Marie Wallbank
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Newtown Road
WR14 1PF

Dear Mrs Wallbank

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

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2014, 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 November 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:

- ensure that all leaders, teachers and teaching assistants take full responsibility for accelerating the progress made by all pupils in mathematics, reading and writing
- ensure that leaders and teachers with responsibility for subjects identify the necessary priorities and implement the appropriate strategies to raise attainment in mathematics, reading and writing
- identify pupils' needs, analyse outcomes and provide effective support so that no pupil 'slips through the net'.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a school improvement advisor to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

One of the three new teachers appointed in September 2013 left in December. A replacement has been successfully appointed. The deputy headteacher has taken responsibility for mathematics.

Main findings

You are determined that the school will undergo a 'sea change' and that the necessary improvements will be achieved. You have begun to track pupils' rates of progress and your recent analysis has enabled you to identify anomalies between different groups and individuals. You have made teachers aware of pupils making slow or insufficient progress so that appropriate support can be provided. Such information has helped to highlight the necessity for teachers to keep track of pupils' progress with regular and accurate assessments. Teachers are increasingly aware that they are responsible when pupils fail to attain the standards expected of them. Teaching assistants have received training to help them provide effective and regular short-term support for pupils.

A teacher was appointed in September to take responsibility for literacy throughout the school. She has identified appropriate priorities and prepared an initial plan of action to raise attainment in writing. The effectiveness of early initiatives will be reviewed and the plan amended accordingly.

Planned activities and training events respond directly to the areas for improvement identified in the recent s5 inspection report. However, the suggested areas for improvement do not go far enough to address the significant weaknesses in pupils' attainment in mathematics, reading and writing. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages fell below national figures in 2013. You agree with the Chair of the Governing Body and the school improvement advisor that more needs to be done to accelerate the rates of pupils' progress in all subjects.

The Chair of the Governing Body is clearly focused on improvements to pupils' progress and attainment and has asserted that the school must adopt a 'no excuses culture.' She has a forensic approach to seeking evidence and is not afraid to hold others to account. She interrogates reports presented to governors and has a clear structure of committees with delegated responsibilities. The Chair of the Governing Body is ambitious and positive about the future and sees the inspection as a springboard for improvements. Governors have identified their training needs and

providers sought. Governors have been fully involved in identifying priorities for planned improvements and will regularly monitor the school's progress.

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

The school improvement advisor has a clear view of the school; its difficulties and its potential. She confirmed that leaders have adopted a real sense of urgency and recognise that change is needed. The local authority will formerly monitor the progress made by the school at Project Boards attended by the headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body, the school improvement advisor and a local authority manager. Progress will be evaluated and pupils' achievements will remain under close scrutiny. The school improvement advisor will visit the school fortnightly to identify any necessary intervention. Support has been provided for subject leaders, the leadership role of the deputy headteacher and providing support for pupils identified as having special educational needs. Training and coaching has been provided for teachers and teaching assistants. The local authority will keep a close watch on pupils' progress and attainment and searching questions will be asked at Project Board meetings.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Worcester local authority.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector