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Ms Joanna Seymour
St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary School
St Paul's Wood Hill
St Paul's Cray
Orpington
BR5 2SR

Dear Ms Seymour

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- provide more opportunities for teachers to develop as middle leaders to strengthen school leadership
- improve the use of displays in classrooms and around school to stimulate and support pupils in their learning.

Evidence

During the visit meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The post-Ofsted action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was scrutinised including current pupil performance information. I toured the school with you and an assistant headteacher

visiting every classroom. I met a small group of Year 5 and 6 pupils in the Year 6 classroom to look at and discuss their work.

Context

Since the last inspection one part-time teacher has left and has been replaced by a long term supply teacher. This appointment has enabled the assistant headteacher to have additional leadership time. Another teacher has been covered for maternity leave. A new business manager and an additional Early Years Foundation Stage practitioner are now in post. The school has continued to work towards becoming an academy as part of a recently approved umbrella trust consisting of the seven Bromley Catholic primary schools.

Main findings

The committed headteacher and staff are working with determination and enthusiasm to secure improvement. The newly formed subject curriculum teams are developing teachers' understanding of pupils' learning leading to more consistent application of the school's policies. This team working is also providing some opportunities for teachers to develop as middle leaders. However, the drivers of school improvement remain at the senior level with too few opportunities to cultivate and develop middle leadership.

Good practice in marking writing, identified in last inspection report, has been extended to all subjects in all year groups. Older pupils, in particular, are using the school approach to assess their own work and others. As a result, they have a greater understanding of the purpose of marking which is contributing to their improved rates of progress. Most pupils are routinely responding to teachers' comments and the school is considering how to make this practice more effective. Teachers across the school are now more aware of the need to provide challenge to all groups of pupils, including the most able in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils said they are enjoying the new challenges, some of which everyone can tackle while others are targeted to different groups.

Effective monitoring and high expectations are leading to improvements in teaching. Targeted support is provided for teachers judged not yet good. Classrooms are well organised but teachers are not making the best use of displays to stimulate and support learning. Teachers are now more confident in their use of performance information because better systems are in place to monitor and check the achievement of pupils. There has been a significant shift away from just focusing on pupils' attainment, to measuring the progress individuals and different groups are making from their starting points. The data system is also supporting leaders to hold teachers to greater account for the progress of individual and groups of pupils they teach. Pupils who are falling behind are quickly identified. Intervention and support is carefully planned to plug any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils' progress across the school has accelerated and there is a

narrowing of the gaps between pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and others.

The post-Ofsted action plan skilfully combines the areas that require improvements identified in the inspection report with the school's accurate knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. Actions are well planned and systematic so leaders, governors and teachers can see their roles in improving the school. Success criteria and clearly specified interim milestones for improvements in teaching and pupils' progress enable leaders and governors to check the effectiveness of their actions.

Since the last inspection governors have continued to provide good support to the school. Minutes of meetings show they are asking challenging questions about pupils' performance and attendance, including for those eligible for the pupil premium. They are undertaking visits to ensure they are fully informed about the work of the school. The new 'data group' aims to check performance data and provide focused information to all governors about pupils' achievement and so hold the school to greater account. The headteacher is revising her approach of reporting to governors with more emphasis on the evaluation of the impact of actions.

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 local authority has acted since the school was judged to require improvement to provide support for: the leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage; special educational needs; and the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This support has been well received in the school with impact evident in the classroom and reviewed by the local authority. As a result, this support is set to continue and be increased for the spring term of 2014. The school is working proactively with the other Bromley Catholic primary schools to exchange good practice. This is increasing the confidence of teachers, providing them wider experiences and leading to better classroom practice. The local authority appointed a School Improvement Partner who has visited the school once in November 2013. A new School Improvement Partner has yet to visit the school. Consequently, there has been limited impact of this aspect of the local authority's support.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett
Her Majesty's Inspector