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17 January 2014

Mrs Maureen Fletcher  
Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Dewsbury)  
Healds Road  
Dewsbury  
West Yorkshire  
WF13 4HY

Dear Mrs Fletcher

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Dewsbury), Kirklees**

Following my visit to your school on 16 January 2014, 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.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a representative for the diocese. The school action plan was evaluated and we looked at some of the written evidence of impact to-date. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to them

#### **Context**

There are no contextual changes since the last inspection.

#### **Main findings**

Leaders have taken decisive and appropriate action to address the areas for improvement since the last inspection. Some of these areas were already part of the school's journey to good, but they are being addressed with 'renewed vigour'. Despite a delay in the publishing

of the inspection report, leaders have wasted no time in moving things forward. A recent training day with the diocese has allowed staff valuable time for reflection. This has raised morale and restored their confidence to be the best they can be.

The school's action plan is sharply focused and indicates clearly the steps planned to ensure the school moves to good. Leaders have set ambitious targets for improvement for the quality of teaching and the progress of higher ability pupils. They are using the expertise within school and have been outward looking in drawing upon the support of the local authority, partner schools and the diocese. The National Leader in Education is providing leaders with an accurate external view of the school and is ensuring they remain focused and on track. This is clearly helping staff to self-evaluate and make positive changes in the way they plan, teach and organise their classrooms. Leaders are already able to evidence the impact their actions are making.

The school's own view and external views of teaching and learning are that it is good and some aspects are outstanding. There is clear evidence to show that this is the case, because of the accuracy and rigour of the checks being made. Leaders are fully aware that there needs to be better provision and greater challenge for the more-able learners and this has been a key focus of their work with staff. The Special Needs Coordinator is now leading on inclusion to incorporate provision for the more able and is working closely with the other subject leads to ensure that teaching and provision is meeting the needs of these pupils and accelerating progress. Leaders are using the pupil premium to target higher ability pupils and close the gap for this group. The latest assessment data and pupils' work is demonstrating impact because of this sharp focus.

Leadership is better distributed and the leadership team has been pivotal in driving forward improvements. Subject leaders have supported staff to improve planning and teaching, particularly for the more-able. They have challenged teachers to ensure that expectations are high for all pupils and that they 'plan with the forefront of challenge to mind'. Middle leaders are working with teachers on specific areas in their teaching that need improvement. Visits to lessons, looking at pupils' work and discussions with pupils during the monitoring visit confirmed that actions are improving teaching. For instance, the mathematics lead has worked with a less experienced member of staff to ensure that challenge is planned for within mathematics lessons. In the lesson seen, pupils were being challenged to choose and investigate mathematical statements. This ensured that they had to apply what they knew to test whether statements were true or false and explain why. When questioned pupils fully understood what they had to do and why. They explained how they checked the statements and what they had learned from their investigations. Pupils' work showed that teachers are now moving learning on within the lesson because they are checking and providing challenge.

Pupils better understand their targets and during visits to lessons, there were indications that targets are being used more consistently across school and this is helping pupils to assess their own learning accurately. For instance, in a Year 4 class, pupils knew exactly what they needed to include in their writing. They made accurate checks against these targets to ensure that their writing was of the standard expected. This motivated them and they wanted to produce writing that was of a high standard. The lesson objective ensured

That, as well as developing writing skills, pupils were using higher order reading skills by mimicking the character in their writing and showing an understanding of how the character felt and responded to others.

Although the work of the governing body was not an area for improvement, governors have actively sought support from the local authority to ensure that they can further improve their work and have requested a review of governance. This is due to take place in February. They were concerned that their view of the school did not correlate with the inspection outcome. They want to be sure that they have the skills to provide the necessary challenge and ensure their view is an accurate one. They receive detailed information from leaders but struggle to get through it all. We discussed some ways forward with this. The review will further help them to check robustly and effectively on the progress of the school. They have been fully involved in developing the action plan and know precisely what actions are being taken and what they are aiming for.

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 and diocese have worked seamlessly to ensure that the school gets the best support possible and have targeted their work appropriately using all the information they have about the school. The headteacher has welcomed this support and staff are valuing the opportunity to learn from others within the networks that have been established.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**