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Miss F McGonigle
Headteacher
Annecy Catholic Primary School
Sutton Avenue
Seaford
East Sussex
BN25 4LF

Dear Miss McGonigle

Special measures monitoring inspection of Annecy Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese. I undertook brief visits to all classrooms with you, and I checked aspects of safeguarding. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans.

Context

There have been no significant changes in the school since the previous inspection. Staffing remains a challenge this year with three non-permanent staff regularly teaching classes in the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and your senior staff are rising to the challenge of bringing about significant improvement in the work of this school, with courage and commitment. You demonstrate a clear understanding of the key priorities and you are determined to ensure that the school achieves stability, and that teaching and learning in every classroom improves to match the best in the school currently. You are planning to bring about these improvements in the spirit of the school's Christian vision and values.

Some useful improvements have already come about, including further refinements to the new systems introduced last term to monitor the achievement of pupils, good quality training opportunities for teachers, and more regular monitoring of the quality of teaching. As a consequence, there is no teaching that is inadequate and some teaching that requires improvement is beginning to improve.

The school has a strong ethos. Pupils' good behaviour, and their willingness to learn, give you a good platform on which to bring about the changes that are necessary to improve teaching and, at the same time, ensure that pupils continue to enjoy their learning. For example, you are introducing pupils to the use of National Curriculum sub-levels in order to be able to assess their work, but you are doing so with sensitivity to its possible shortcomings, and emphasising the potential for diagnostic assessment and greater clarity about next steps in learning.

The local authority is offering good support to the school; a local authority officer is monitoring the responses to this support closely and regularly with you and governors. Support from four consultants has been provided; they have assisted you and your staff with developments in literacy, mainly in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage until now, and in numeracy, mainly in Key Stage 2 so far. They have also helped you to audit and reorganise provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The local authority has also established links with a local leader of education (LLE) from a local teaching school to support your strategic development work.

The local authority is supporting the governing body effectively to undertake a review of their work, and is providing ongoing training. Governors have become better able to offer support and challenge to you and your team, as a consequence. They have improved their grasp of achievement information and can now monitor whether the progress being made in each class is improving sufficiently, using the measures of achievement at key points over this year in the local authority action plan. The Chair of the Governing Body spoke with me with authority and confidence about the challenges facing the school this year, and described the governing body as having a core of strong and committed people who will support the school.

In some ways, it is unfortunate that the local authority advised you not to make adjustments to your existing school improvement plan, but rather to use the local authority plan as the key document. The local authority plan provides a clear and useful strategic overview of what needs to be done, by when and broadly how, but there is no school development plan to help you to connect these priorities to the work in classrooms in ways that work best for the school. However, you have formulated two subject leader action plans, in numeracy and literacy, there is a governing body action plan, and a plan for pupils with special educational needs. You demonstrate a clear understanding of what this suite of plans must achieve, including mapping children's learning to ensure coherence and progression from one year to the next, especially in writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and in mathematics throughout all year groups. While these four detailed plans cover a lot of the important aspects, there are gaps. For example, you are keen to develop a strategic plan to steer improvements in the quality of teaching.

Parents and carers have been very supportive of the school and the meeting held for them following the publication of the inspection report was well attended and useful. There is a clear understanding of the need to keep parents and carers well informed about the progress of the school, and genuine enthusiasm to do so, but no formal arrangements have yet been established about how this should happen.

The diocese is also offering valuable support to you, through the provision of contact with an experienced headteacher in another school, and by organising a national leader of governance (NLG) to work with your Chair of the Governing Body. They have also negotiated the appointment of a new governor who has useful experience and can contribute to the oversight of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

Following the monitoring inspection these judgements were made.

- The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.
- The school's improvement/action plan is not fit for purpose, because planning is not yet complete. This will be checked on the next visit.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection, in consultation with me and with my agreement.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector