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7 February 2014

Mary Johnson  
Our Lady's Catholic Primary School  
East Meadway  
Tile Cross  
Birmingham  
B33 0AU

Dear Mrs Johnson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Our Lady's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 6 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 19 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:

- Produce a clear plan of action which identifies how leaders' intended outcomes will be achieved in all areas for improvement identified in the last section 5 inspection.
- Ensure the plan of action identifies what needs to be done, who will be responsible for leading individual actions, when it will be done by and what the expected outcomes are.
- Ensure that the plan is updated regularly so that leaders can check the progress of the actions and governors can evaluate the success of the actions taken.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The rapid improvement plan was evaluated. I also considered the minutes of the governing body, your reports to the governing body, your monitoring records and those completed by phase leaders. I also looked at pupils' work when I visited classrooms.

## **Context**

One full time teacher has been recruited to replace a supply teacher in Year 1.

## **Main findings**

You have shown determination to bring about improvements in Our Lady's Catholic Primary School since joining the school as an interim headteacher in September 2013. During the section 5 inspection in November inspectors noted that you had already set a clear direction for improvements and gained the full support of staff.

Since the inspection, with your deputy headteacher, you have identified long-term goals for improvement, established and met the staff's initial training needs and clarified roles and responsibilities. However, in embarking on the journey and losing no time, you have not adequately prepared a coordinated plan of action to help leaders and managers keep on course and enable governors to evaluate your success over time. There are a number of individual plans owned by leaders, including phase and subject leaders, but these need to be brought together to form a single overarching plan which can be frequently updated and checked. The current rapid improvement plan is not fit for this purpose because it fails to focus specifically on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection.

You have improved the Reception learning areas, their resources and play equipment. You have shared clear expectations for how you want to see learning organised in Reception and you have provided appropriate training, support and expertise. The learning area is well organised and better facilitates young children's learning.

Records of assessment introduced in October 2013 for all pupils provide clear evidence of the progress made by individual children in each area of learning. Those pupils who make slow progress or fall behind are quickly identified and support provided. Review meetings are held weekly to ensure any barrier to their success is removed. As a result, teachers are more aware of spotting problems, taking responsibility and intervening to halt underachievement.

You have communicated clear expectations of teachers and managers and shared with them how their performance will be judged. You have adopted the published Teaching Standards as a baseline for your reviews. These common standards mean that all leaders, managers, teachers and governors have consistent expectations of the required quality of teaching. Records of your lesson observations show your

clear evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Feedback to teachers is direct and development points are clear and checked. You also check pupils' work in their books, across subjects, to ensure that agreed procedures are followed. Improvement points are revisited within days and such information dovetails with performance management decisions.

You have prepared and shared the standards which will inform your judgements made during learning walks. These include the quality of displays; the organisation and resources for learning; the quality of pupils' work and teachers' marking; and the ethos created by all. Governors are equally aware of these expectations and are able to adopt them in their own observations around the school.

Your reorganisation of the school into phases has helped to develop middle leaders within the school and they too are taking an active role in improving the quality of teaching. Their monitoring is at an early stage and records show a tendency to check for compliance with policies rather than evaluate the skills of teachers. This was particularly the case in their book scrutinies where there is insufficient consideration of the value of chosen teaching approaches; whether the pupils did the right level of work and understood it; or whether the activities best met their learning needs.

Seven new governors were appointed in December 2013 which has added much needed experience and expertise to the governing body. Governors are clear about their expectations of leaders and they are equally ambitious about the school's future. They are determined to be visible in school and expect thorough and detailed information to help them fulfil their roles. Minutes of governors' meetings show they have focused appropriately on the funding available for pupil premium pupils and how it is spent. They keep a close eye on the performance of these pupils through their analysis of available data. There has been a review of governance and training has already been taken up, for example in understanding and analysing published data on pupils' performance. In addition, governors have been pro-active and signed up for e-learning so they can access it at their own convenience and keep up to date about their responsibilities.

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**

You have drawn extensively from the support of independent consultants, training providers and John Henry Newman Catholic College. This support has enabled speedy training for staff at all levels. A recently appointed local authority representative will conduct reviews of the school's progress in future though there has been no review to date.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**