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Miss Julia Christy
Headteacher
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
Stonesby Avenue
Leicester
LE2 6TY

Dear Miss Christy

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 March 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 January 2014. 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:

- sharpen up the success criteria in the school improvement plan which refers to the use of computer technology, so that its impact on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics can be demonstrated clearly.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the assistant headteacher, three governors including the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We visited all classes to look at the learning that was taking place. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information about pupils' progress, a sample of pupils' work and the school's improvement plan.

Context

Two teachers have left since the last inspection. The school is advertising to recruit permanent staff to replace two temporary appointments.

Main findings

You and the governors have acted decisively to tackle weaknesses in teaching. You are working closely with the assistant headteacher to raise teachers' expectations about how much more pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, can achieve. These raised expectations are clearly identified in the revised targets set out in the school improvement plan. Senior leaders are making sure that the support given by a seconded leader for improving teaching is motivating teachers to improve their practice. Leaders check teachers' planning, teaching and pupils' work, focusing on key areas, so that the momentum gained from the support so far in improving pupils' progress is not lost. You are ensuring that specific groups of pupils, for example, those who have the potential to attain the highest level in mathematics national tests, are receiving suitable additional support.

Governors are using their training on understanding pupils' performance data to ask sharper questions about pupils' progress, including the progress made by pupils supported by the additional government funding (pupil premium) for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The external review of governance, which is imminent, is being approached positively. Governors are determined to rationalise the work of committees so that duplication is eliminated and levels of accountability are clear. The rationalisation seeks to build further on the strengths that governors already have in monitoring the work of the school.

The improvement plan addresses all the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. There are suitable and measurable criteria to check how well actions lead to intended outcomes, except in the case of the use of computer technology in lessons to support learning. These success criteria are not sufficiently clear or measurable in terms of improving pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Leaders have used support from a good school to improve teaching. The local authority's support for developing governors' knowledge about pupils' performance data is strengthening this aspect of governors' work. The local authority has given some general training to staff on dealing with some pupils' challenging behaviour. The support will continue next term to meet specific needs as identified by senior leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector