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Suzan O'Meally
Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School
Gregory Avenue
Weoley Castle
Birmingham
B29 5DY

Dear Mrs O'Meally

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 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 November. 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, I held meetings with you and the leadership team and with three members of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority and the National Leader of Education to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated school leaders' plans for improving the school and I looked at records of the checks that leaders make on the work of teachers. In addition I considered the report written following an external review of governance.

Context

A new assistant headteacher has been appointed since the section 5 inspection. One teacher, who had a leadership responsibility, left the school in December 2013.

Main findings

You and other school leaders, along with the governing body, are determined that the school will quickly make the changes necessary in order to be judged as good at the next inspection. Your plans for improvement are rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement. You have engaged positively with the support provided by the local authority. For example, since the inspection school leaders have been working with colleagues from a local teaching school alliance. You have welcomed this external support and challenge and have established positive and open working relationships.

School leaders' arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching have been improved. A detailed plan sets out the monitoring activities that will take place. Leaders visit lessons regularly and look at the work in pupils' books. Leaders have made checks on teachers' planning to ensure that activities in lessons are carefully matched to children's prior learning and provide a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. School leaders also meet with class teachers each half term to discuss pupils' progress. Targeted support is put in place for any pupils who are underachieving and their progress is carefully evaluated.

Leaders have made it clear to all teachers that only good teaching is good enough. Training has been provided for teachers as well as opportunities for them to observe good and outstanding teaching both within the school and in other partner schools. Further individually tailored support and challenge is being provided where teaching requires improvement.

Records from the checks made by leaders on the work in pupils' books indicate that teachers' marking of pupils' work is becoming more consistent. Most teachers are now giving pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are more regularly being given time to respond to teachers' comments and use them to improve their work.

Training has been provided for teaching assistants in order to ensure that they have a positive impact on learning and progress throughout lessons, as well as in the support sessions that they lead with small groups of pupils. Teachers have also received training to enable them to deploy teaching assistants more effectively and make best use of their time. Leaders have improved the ways that they measure the success of the support sessions delivered by teaching assistants.

School leaders and governors are working hard to improve engagement with parents. Parents have been invited to complete and return questionnaires and to attend workshops. An open 'surgery' with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher took place in early March when parents were welcome to come and discuss any concerns. This is due to be repeated in May. Suggestions and outcomes from surveys, workshops and surgeries are reported in school newsletters.

Governors have attended the two most recent parents' evenings in order to be available to speak with parents.

Governors share the determination of the headteacher to make the necessary improvements without delay. However, a report written following the recent external review of governance recognises weaknesses. The report found that roles and responsibilities for governors have not been clearly established. It recommends that governors should establish a clear code of conduct which includes requirements for confidentiality. The need for improvement in the management of agendas and in clerking arrangements is also identified. The report recognises that the governing body has been strengthened this year by the addition of two experienced foundation governors. The review also recommended that governors consider reconstitution, in line with current guidance. A considerable amount of governors' time has been taken in seeking to resolve a number of complaints and this has taken attention away from pupil progress and the quality of teaching. Governors are clear about the importance of moving forward with a strong focus on obtaining the best outcomes for pupils.

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 an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the Strategic Support Adviser for School Improvement is providing good support to help the school move forward. The local authority has arranged for the school to receive challenge and support from a National Leader of Education and from other leaders in the teaching school alliance.

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

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel
Her Majesty's Inspector