

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



27 March 2014

Mrs Catherine Mclaughlin
Interim Headteacher
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Whitehouse Road
Bircotes
Doncaster
DN11 8EF

Dear Mrs Mclaughlin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 second 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your literacy co-ordinator, representatives of the governing body and advisers from the local authority and diocese. The updated school improvement plan was evaluated. Current information about the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics was scrutinised and discussed.

Context

In December 2013, the headteacher retired and an interim headteacher was appointed until the end of this academic year. Governors have confirmed their intention to appoint a new, substantive headteacher from September 2014. A new parent governor has been appointed to the governing body.

Main findings

The interim headteacher has brought a renewed sense of purpose and urgency to the school's plans for improvement. There is now an appropriate action plan in place, which includes challenging targets for pupil achievement and which outlines the actions leaders will take to monitor and evaluate improvement up to the next inspection. The interim headteacher has acted decisively to put in place a new system for tracking the progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching staff have cross-checked all their assessments and worked with leaders to identify quickly where any additional support for pupils is necessary. Consequently, the school's information on pupils' current achievement is accurate. This shows that rates of progress are increasing across all aspects of learning; including for more able pupils.

Leaders are aware that the rate of improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been quick enough. They have put in place a support plan which includes developing planning and assessment with the interim headteacher's own school. This has had a positive impact on the learning environment in this key stage but, as yet, has not had the necessary impact on pupils' outcomes.

Teachers now have a clear sense of direction and are strongly supportive of the changes that have been brought about since January. It is evident that the effectiveness of initiatives such as the phonics programme are closely monitored. Many more pupils in Year 1 are now on track to reach the expected standard in the national phonics screening check; all those who did not reach this standard last year, have made significant gains in their understanding of the sounds that letters make. Pupils attend school more regularly and the vast majority of them are consistently punctual.

Governors receive accurate information on pupils' achievement, and the school action plan enables them to keep a close check on the progress being made. They independently monitor improvement, such as through scrutinising pupils' workbooks to check that marking is becoming more consistent. Consequently, they now present a more informed challenge to school leaders. They have acted decisively to ensure that the transition in leadership has not had a detrimental impact on the pace of school improvement.

The school is taking effective action in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection.

External support

The local authority and diocesan advisers continue to work closely with each other, and with the school. They have provided effective support to governors in guiding their decision making over the long-term plans for the school's leadership. The local authority adviser also supports the interim headteacher in monitoring improvements to the quality of teaching. Additional, external support from the interim

headteacher's own school has also proved to be effective, particularly in making improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire and to Mr John Cape, the Director for Schools for the Diocese of Hallam.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector