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Mrs Elizabeth Green
Headteacher
St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Coppull
Spendmore Lane
Coppull
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 5DH

Dear Mrs Green

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Coppull, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 3 April 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 February 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Documents summarising other actions taken since the section 5 inspection were also scrutinised. A learning walk of the school was undertaken with the headteacher. Pupils' exercise books were scrutinised to evaluate improvements in writing skills over time.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school's context since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

Tracking and monitoring systems to chart pupil progress have improved. Staff have a better understanding of pupils' starting points and the next steps they need to take to consolidate their learning and make further progress. In their planning of learning activities staff are more conscious of the need to offer opportunities for stretch and challenge particularly for the more able students. A stronger focus on writing is apparent from both class room displays and the scrutiny of pupil exercise books. Improved modelling by teachers of writing and vocabulary skills was evidenced from classroom visits. The development of 'working walls' in all classrooms to show students' work and examples of best practice has had a positive impact on pupils' work ethos and ambition. Pupils are now able to reference a 'marking ladder' to access their own skills and understand what they need to do next to improve. Pupils are provided with more opportunities to reflect upon their work and consolidate their learning. Staff training by external consultants in developing marking skills and the teaching of writing has impacted on improved practice. The headteacher, newly appointed at the school's last inspection, has benefited from additional training and a mentoring programme with a local headteacher of an outstanding school. She works productively with the deputy headteacher and staff. More effective systems have been developed to strengthen staff responsibilities and accountabilities. Additional training is helping subject leaders understand and perform their responsibilities more effectively.

A review of governance has been undertaken. A new chair and several new governors have been appointed, some with administrative and teaching experience in education. Training in governance and data analysis has proved useful for the governing body and sharpened their role in scrutinising school performance and the quality of teaching and learning.

External support

The local authority is committed to supporting the school in aiding its improvement planning and practice. The local authority's monitoring and intervention team (MIT) has played a key role in providing and facilitating training for governors, managers and teachers. Links have been established with best practice schools.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector