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3 April 2014

Mr Paul Wardle
Headteacher
Holy Cross CofE Primary School
Ruth Street
Oldham
Greater Manchester
OL1 3EZ

Dear Mr Wardle

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Cross CofE Primary School, Oldham

Following my visit to the school on 2 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 December 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.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders and with three members of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plan and other documents to show what the school has put into place since the previous inspection.

Context

Since the inspection, a second deputy headteacher has been appointed who will start at the school after Easter.

Main findings

- The governors who were new to the school at the time of the previous inspection have now been trained and take a full part in decisions made by the governing body. The governors have started to collect examples of information packs with a view to create their own to help any new Holy Cross governor, to know their roles and responsibilities before they attend their first meeting.
- Governors have a better oversight over the performance of the school as a result of each having a copy of the school's data and as a result of training in how to read and interpret the data.
- Senior leaders and those who lead subjects, or year groups in the school, have already implemented improvements to teaching English and mathematics, and teaching in Key Stage 1 (the infants). As a result a greater proportion of pupils is making good progress and is on course to attain the level they should for their age.
- According to the school's information the quality of teaching has improved. Staff have been trained in how to improve their marking and feedback to pupils. The school's surveys indicate pupils now know their targets and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers are more focussed on teaching lessons that build on pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils are making faster progress.

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

There has not been much support from the local authority. It has, however, organised support from other local schools such as Yew Tree School which is part of a teaching alliance. Teachers from Holy Cross have shadowed and worked with teachers at Yew Tree, consequently, teachers at Holy Cross now make sure pupils write not just in English lessons but also in other subjects which has helped to raise standards in writing.

The local authority has placed too many children in the school's infant classes. Instead of a maximum of 30 pupils, the teachers in Key Stage 1 have more than 30 pupils in a class which breaks statutory regulations.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Oldham and as below.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] – for academies