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27 March 2014

Mrs Maureen Etheridge
Headteacher
St Saviour's Catholic Primary School
Summers Lane
Totland Bay
PO39 0HQ

Dear Mrs Etheridge

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

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The first monitoring inspection took place in June 2013 and an advisory visit took place in October 2013.

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:

- ensure that inadequate teaching is eradicated in the Reception Year in order for children to progress rapidly and make up lost ground
- strengthen leadership further by ensuring that middle leaders develop better understanding of how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the vice-chair of governors to discuss the action taken since the section 5 inspection and the last monitoring

inspection visit. We observed teaching in all year groups. I also undertook additional shorter visits to classes. I evaluated pupils' work and documentation related to pupils' progress. I also met with a group of pupils to discuss improvements since my last visit.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection visit you have been released from your teaching commitment. A new teacher has been appointed to share the teaching of the mixed Year 1 and 2 class. A teacher has been appointed to work with specific groups of pupils and also shares the mixed Year 3 and 4 class. You have also appointed a mathematics tutor to support specific groups of pupils.

Main findings

Achievement and progress have considerably improved in nearly all year groups since the last monitoring inspection visit. Your leadership has brought an increased sense of ambition and purpose to the whole school community. Parents, pupils, teachers and governors all agree that the school is improving rapidly.

Pupils in nearly all year groups are making better progress in English and mathematics, as evidenced by current information about their achievement. The most able pupils in Year 6 are preparing for Level 6 test papers in mathematics, clearly demonstrating raised expectations and a greater sense of confidence. Nearly all pupils are making better than expected progress, including the most able and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Middle leaders responsible for mathematics and English have gained confidence, but need to develop greater skills in measuring, analysing and evaluating pupils' progress in all year groups.

Pupils' extended writing has improved. Pupils enjoy immersing themselves in inspiring fiction and non-fiction books in order to prepare for their own writing. Pupils show greater awareness of language, sensitivity to the reader and joy in their own creativity. Their writing is more accurate and neatly presented. Improvements in teachers' marking of writing are now thoroughly established. Pupils told me that they take much more responsibility for editing and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in their own work. As a result, they are attaining higher levels.

In nearly all classes additional adults are making a positive contribution to pupils' improved progress. Teaching assistants now do much more than hand out resources and supervise behaviour. They enhance pupils' learning through carefully planned group work and individual support. For example, I saw one teacher's practical step-by-step planning for the teaching assistant's input in her lesson, which was sharply focused on improving progress for particular pupils.

Pupils usually work purposefully and productively in lessons. They move through tasks and activities promptly so very little time is wasted. They are now used to working things out for themselves thoughtfully and solving problems with patience and diligence, instead of giving up when tasks seem too difficult. Nearly all classrooms are cheerful and equipped with useful resources so that pupils can access what they need to make good progress. Pupils, teachers and governors all agree that behaviour has greatly improved. At my previous inspection visit I had observed a few pupils who were inattentive and easily distracted. During this monitoring inspection visit I observed the same pupils completely absorbed in their work and proud of what they had achieved.

Your evaluations of teaching and pupils' progress are accurate. You are right to be concerned that children in the Reception Year are not making as much progress as pupils in other year groups. You have provided guidance and challenge for the Reception teacher and ensured that shared observations of good practice have taken place. However, teaching in the Reception Year has not improved since my first monitoring inspection visit. More-able children are not sufficiently challenged or stimulated, so their progress is slower than expected. Planning for children with low starting points does not take enough account of their needs and ability, so they struggle to catch up. Children's work in the Reception Year is poorly presented, with little evidence of thorough and accurate assessment. Children's art, construction skills and creative play are not sufficiently well-developed or celebrated and they are not making enough progress with reading, writing and number work. Both the Reception Year classroom and outdoor area are untidy and not suitably organised to promote high quality learning. Other adults are not deployed effectively to develop children's communication skills or promote imaginative play. Urgent action is needed to ensure that provision, teaching and outcomes for children in the Reception Year improve rapidly.

Governors have undertaken an honest and thorough audit of their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they are working more strategically, taking a more ambitious and long-term view of the school. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the school and have acquired more expertise with analysing information about pupils' progress. They continue to challenge the headteacher and have improved the precision of their questions. Governors told me that the reputation of the school in the community has improved.

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

Hampshire local authority continues to provide a good level of support for the school, including in English and mathematics. A suitable link with a school in Hampshire has been established, benefiting school leaders and enabling them to see

what good teaching and progress look like. The local authority has reviewed teaching in the school and confirms that improvements are rapid in most areas. The local authority is acutely aware that more needs to be done to eradicate inadequate teaching and improve children's progress in the Reception year.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector