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9 May 2014

Mrs Susan Long
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Queen's Road
Ingrow
Keighley
West Yorkshire
BD21 1AR

Dear Mrs Long

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 January 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure all teachers plan for the needs of the most able in mathematics, so that they make the progress they are capable of.
- sharpen the action plan so that it has periodic and measurable outcomes for pupil achievement to support the governing body when making its regular checks on the school's progress.
- ensure that the data presented to governors supports them to find the information they need quickly and to check against the outcomes provided in the action plan.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and undertook a work scrutiny in mathematics.

Context

Since the inspection in January there have been some changes to staffing. A temporary teacher has been appointed to a Year 2 class. The Assistant Headteacher has taken on the leadership of mathematics and another member of staff has been appointed internally to lead English.

Main findings

You have addressed the areas for improvement with renewed vigour since the inspection in January. You were heartened that the inspection identified that the school was already on its journey to being good and recognised the progress that had been made. This, you say, has strengthened your resolve to ensure the school is good, sooner than later.

The action plan sets out clearly what you need to do and who will be responsible for delivering the actions, checking on progress and evaluating impact. We agreed it does need periodic and measurable milestones for pupil progress and attainment. We agreed that the target for good teaching needs to be raised for December 2014, if the school is to be good sooner than later. This will support your view that nothing less than good is acceptable and make clear to staff your expectations.

During my visit, we were able to identify a number of areas and aspects of the school's work that have improved since the inspection.

Leadership has been strengthened. You have utilised and built upon the strengths of the senior leadership team even further by delegating responsibilities that are ensuring the pace of improvement is quickened. The strategic change you have made to the leadership of English, reading and mathematics has ensured there have been speedy improvements, particularly in mathematics and reading. These staff are being provided with the necessary training and support they need to be effective in their roles and this is ensuring sustainability for the school. The appointment of the new leader for English is very recent and consequently, there is not as much evidence at this stage to evaluate the impact of her work. However, all leaders have a clear picture of where their subject is at and are taking appropriate actions to support and challenge teachers.

The data and tracking system is helping staff to take ownership of the progress pupils are making and you are holding them robustly to account for this through regular progress meetings and through performance management systems. Where the small pocket of teaching remains weak, despite the support you have put into place, you have taken decisive action to address this and you will accept nothing less than good teaching every day for the pupils.

Ground has been gained in securing the accuracy of assessment and more staff are using this information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. We agreed there is still some work to be done to ensure consistency in teaching. Our scrutiny of mathematics' work and visits to lessons highlighted this. In some classes, teacher expectation is high but, we still found

evidence to show that not all staff have these high expectations, particularly for the most able. These pupils are not making the progress they are capable of in most classes. Interventions and good teaching in Year 6 are ensuring gaps are being closed and that the most able are being suitably challenged. We agreed that all teachers need to plan appropriately to best meet the learning needs of these pupils, so that this level of intervention is not necessary as the pupils move through school. You have tackled gaps in achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 and these gaps are closing as a result of the actions you have taken. You recognise that, for older pupils, there is still much to be done because of the poorer teaching they have received over a long period of time but, you are taking the necessary action to address this.

Our work scrutiny showed that teachers are now using marking and feedback more effectively to promote learning. Pupils are responding positively to teacher feedback and spending time correcting their work. This is aiding progress.

The governing body continues to monitor the work of the school rigorously and fully understands its role in supporting and challenging leaders to move the school to good. It receives a wealth of information from which it can provide challenge and makes checks through the other monitoring work it undertakes. It has an accurate view of where the school is at. However, it would be better supported in this if the action plan had clear and measurable milestones for pupil progress and if data was presented in a format that allowed it to see quickly where there is any underachievement. This will help governors to use their time effectively and, more importantly, focus on the aspects of the school's progress that it needs to, in order to monitor and challenge even better.

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 been providing the necessary support to help the school move to good and has supported developments in the Early Years Foundation stage, English and mathematics. It has made regular checks on how well the school is doing and is confident that the school can move to good sooner than later. You have drawn upon the long-established and strong school partnerships within Bradford to help you improve leadership, tackle weak teaching and secure assessment, so that you know the data you hold on pupils is accurate.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- < 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