

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566868
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: pnuttie@cfbt.com



5 June 2014

Mrs Diane Collins
Headteacher
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Primary School
Finkle Street
Bentley
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN5 0RP

Dear Mrs Collins

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 04 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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. The school should take further action to:

- Build upon the initial rapid pace of improvement evident, iron out the remaining inconsistencies in the achievement and attendance of different groups of pupils and, ensure the impact of teaching is always at least good.

Evidence

During my visit, I met with you, two governors, and a local authority representative. I spoke to pupils and teachers about their work. I evaluated progress and behaviour data, action plans and monitoring records of teaching and attendance. I visited every class in the school, including your Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and examined pupils' books.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection one teacher and one governor have left the school. The school has re-structured and added to the existing senior leadership team by appointing a lead teacher with responsibility for developing and raising pupils' achievement.

Main findings

The school's leaders present as an ambitious, determined and capable group, who are fully-focused on doing whatever is necessary to get the school to good and beyond. Although disappointed in the judgement that the school required improvement to be good they have responded positively and decisively and are making things happen quickly. No time has been lost and their collective endeavours have resulted in clear evidence of impact against each of the priority areas. Strengthening leadership capacity, gaining the commitment of staff to the improvement strategies and holding all staff robustly to account for their work underpins the initial positive direction of travel.

Inspection evidence and the school's latest progress data indicate that the strategies introduced to increase the impact of teaching are working. Teaching is having a greater impact on pupils' learning which is reflected in better progress across the curriculum and an associated rise in standards. Key priorities such as: boosting the quality of boys reading; ensuring teaching and the support provided for those eligible for pupil premium funding meets their needs more effectively; and making certain the most-able pupils reach their potential, are all showing signs of impact.

It is clear from observing lessons, examining pupils' books and talking to staff and pupils that pupils are enjoying their learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of and lessons are focused on systematically building and extending pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects. The challenge for the school is to sustain the initial momentum generated and further close the achievement and attainment gaps that remain between different groups of pupils. These improvements have been underpinned by the sharing of best practices in teaching and learning, mentoring, and training in effective assessment and engagement strategies. The curriculum has also been used creatively to offer pupils more atypical practically-oriented activities, visits and visitors.

The school's efforts to improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence are working overall. However, the attendance of travellers, Irish, and Romany heritage pupils still lags behind that of other groups of pupils. More effective solutions need to be found to break this cycle. Pupils' behaviour was not a concern during this inspection and the school's records show there has been a sharp decline in the number of behaviour incidents recorded.

The school's senior leaders are increasing the capacity and effectiveness of middle leaders. Bespoke training and coaching has given them a clearer picture of the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils in their respective areas of responsibility. It has also given them the skills and confidence to more rigorously and regularly monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and teaching quality. This is supporting improvement because staff are sharper at spotting and intervening to help, any pupils who are falling behind or are 'at risk' of doing so. Training and coaching are also allowing subject leaders to challenge their teams to eradicate any variations in performance between different groups of pupils or year groups.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a 'high profile' presence. Their knowledge and experience of governance developed over time enables them to offer the robust strategic support and challenge to the school's leaders, that is evident from scrutinising the minutes of governing body meetings. A review of pupil premium spending has taken place and the recommendations are being adopted. A review of governance to identify any refinements necessary to increase their impact is ongoing.

The school's improvement plans are generally suitable. However, the school should ensure it knows exactly how it is going to achieve and measure progress against each target, for example, in relation to homework and boys' engagement in reading.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. In the meantime, the school should email a termly progress report to me.

External support

The school receives a range of support and challenge from the Diocese, the local authority, local leaders of education and a number of partner schools, all of which are supporting its drive to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. The Diocese has enlisted its own team of school improvement advisors to monitor and evaluate the quality of education the school provides in a range of areas such as teaching and learning and the curriculum, and offer guidance on suitable improvement strategies. This external 'microscope' that the school is placed under, also serves as an effective calibration of the success of the improvement measures they are implementing and is informing more accurate evaluation. The local authority has a 'lighter touch' centred on strategic advice and guidance linked to target-setting, raising pupils' achievement and improving the consistency of teaching. The local authority also monitors the school's progress in tackling the key priorities. The alliances established with local leaders of learning, and schools rated as outstanding by Ofsted, such as Thorne King Edward school, are proving profitable in adding capacity to middle leadership and increasing the impact of pupil premium spending to drive up standards.

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

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector