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Mrs Sheila Mouna
Headteacher
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
Underwood Road
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Dear Mrs Mouna

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

Following my visit to your school on 12 June 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 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 that actions undertaken to improve the quality of teaching are embedded consistently throughout the school
- monitor closely the planned induction and support programme for both new teachers and new leaders from September 2014.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plans were evaluated. You accompanied me on visits to nine classes. Key documents and the books of a group of pupils were scrutinised.

Context

Significant changes in staffing will be implemented from September 2014. One of your deputy headteachers is retiring and 5 teachers are leaving. The teacher who leads on pupil premium funding will be taking maternity leave. You have appointed an assistant headteacher and two new phase leaders. You have ensured coverage of leadership responsibilities such as that for pupil premium funding. You have successfully appointed to all the teaching vacancies, and will have three newly-qualified teachers and two Teach First students on the staff from September.

Main findings

Following the section 5 inspection, you adapted the existing action plan to incorporate areas for improvement identified in the report. The plan sets realistic timescales for actions to be undertaken, and identifies appropriate milestones to be achieved along the way. The plan is monitored through half-termly meetings which involve the local authority, governors and school leaders. Progress is then reported back to the full governing body. These monitoring and evaluation systems are not made explicit within the plan.

You consider the quality of teaching is improving and this was borne out during our observations. You have reviewed and simplified the marking policy to ensure that it is practicable, and pupils can understand feedback they receive from teachers. Both teachers and pupils say this has improved their work, and pupils enjoy using 'polishing pens' to respond to teacher comments. However, this improvement is not consistent throughout the school. We agreed that where marking is weaker, the standard of pupils' work, including presentation, is also weaker. In most of the classes visited in Key Stage 2, almost all pupils were all working on the same task. As a result, the more able are not always sufficiently challenged, and the less able do not receive the support they need.

Following the inspection, you introduced a new programme to improve standards in writing. Some display boards have been replaced with 'working walls' for literacy and numeracy, providing relevant information that pupils can refer to in class to support their work. You are starting to see a positive impact of these initiatives through increased rates of progress.

Professional development opportunities for staff following the inspection have focused on the areas for improvement identified in the report. Staff can talk about improvements in their practice following training and visits to other schools. You are aware that changes in staffing for September 2014 may weaken the impact of improvements you have made so far. Therefore, you have put robust support systems in place. This includes, for example, new teachers joining the school in July and each having an experienced mentor identified.

Recent results for achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage show that in 2014, over half of children reached a good level of development. This is a significant improvement from around a third in 2013. You are collating detailed information on the achievement of groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium and those with special educational needs. You are confident that results in both Year 2 and Year 6 will also show improvement.

A review of pupil premium spending has taken place and recommended actions are underway. The lead teacher for pupil premium has identified eligible pupils who are underachieving. Actions have been undertaken to address this, and the impact on achievement measured on an individual basis. As a result, you consider the gap in achievement to be closed in Key Stage 1, and closing in Key Stage 2. Governors have a clear understanding of where funding is spent and a new link governor has recently been recruited. You have identified the need to monitor more closely the impact of different aspects of your spending in this area.

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

You consider the support of the local authority to be effective as you seek to improve the school. The level of their support was increased in the autumn term when a review of the school's performance was undertaken. The local authority have provided appropriate support and challenge through half-termly meetings. Leaders describe this support as collaborative, and local authority officers work alongside you to develop, implement and monitor plans. Several local authority consultants have visited the school to support improvements in reading, early years assessment information and moderation of work at Key Stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector