

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9154
Direct email: aidan.dunne@serco.com

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Mrs Leanne Brydon
Headteacher
St Brendan's Catholic Primary School
Beanfield Avenue
Corby
NN18 0AZ

Dear Mrs Brydon

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Brendan'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 confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the commissioned headteacher, the senior school improvement officer, and three senior leaders, including the acting deputy headteacher. I also met with the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body. The sponsor's statement of action and the school action plan were evaluated. I visited classes and talked informally with some pupils.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher has resigned from her post and a new acting headteacher has taken on the role. An acting deputy headteacher and a new coordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational

needs have been appointed from existing school staff. Four governors have resigned, three of whom have been replaced. There is also a new clerk to the governing body. Two new teaching assistants started after half term and a temporary teacher has been employed to cover the class of the acting headteacher. School leaders are currently considering the school's conversion to academy status.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The commissioned headteacher has worked effectively with the acting headteacher, to implement a number of systems in the school, in place of those which were previously inadequate. The commissioned headteacher works in a coaching role and, as a result, the acting headteacher is rapidly building her leadership expertise. Staff credit the acting headteacher for 'pulling the school together', and developing an open culture built upon honesty and trust. This is evident in increased cohesion across key stages and a positive working atmosphere.

A coherent action plan has been drawn up, with appropriate, timely actions to address all areas for improvement. It is clear how governors and the local authority are to keep a regular check on progress. The plan includes measurable criteria for pupils' attainment and progress, in particular for key groups of pupils. Currently, there are insufficient success criteria to measure progress for more-able pupils. Targets relating to the percentage of pupils exceeding expected progress are not sufficiently aspirational.

Leaders have taken rapid action to improve the quality of teaching, which is starting to show positive signs in the classroom. For example, pupils' engagement in lessons is evident. Teachers have accessed a number of training opportunities through the local teaching school alliance. The acting headteacher is clear that she expects to see the result of this training translated into classroom practice. Teachers are trialling methods that have been successful in local outstanding schools. Staff now have clear performance management targets, with specific reference to their pupils' achievement. This is supplemented by regular and thorough monitoring of all aspects of teaching.

Data systems are now fit for purpose and easily accessible. This includes accurate identification of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, teachers are starting to use this information to set appropriate work for pupils. In addition, pupils' progress meetings take place regularly, resulting in a growing understanding that all teachers are accountable for the achievement of their groups. Teachers' assessments are moderated by senior leaders and by the local

authority. Current data provided by school leaders indicate that Year 6 pupils are on track to improve upon outcomes from the previous year. Current Year 4 achievement is a concern, and leaders are taking swift action to address this.

The governing body, led by an experienced and able Chair, has been determined to support leaders in their drive to improve the school at a rapid pace. Governors are much more involved in the work of the school. The creation of new sub-committees has given them greater scope to provide considerable challenge as well as support. A review of the use of pupil premium is due to take place shortly. A review of governance took place in December 2013 and an additional review will take place in the autumn term. Governors are aware of the urgent need to recruit a substantive headteacher.

The local authority's statement of action is comprehensive and detailed. It identifies the considerable support provided for the school, including the temporary appointment of the commissioned headteacher, leadership training opportunities and support brokered from local outstanding schools. It provides information about how the impact of these actions will be measured.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julia Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector