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12 June 2014

Ms Ruth Lewis
Headteacher
St Anselm's Catholic Primary School
Church Avenue
Southall
UB2 4BH

Dear Ms Lewis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Anselm'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 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:

- ensure that all recommendations from the external review of governance are implemented quickly
- sharpen the school's action plan so that actions have clear, measurable outcomes linked to the achievement of different groups of pupils at regular intervals.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and three members of the Governing Body, and a local authority representative to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I looked at documents which included information about the monitoring of teaching. I scrutinised the school's record of checks on new staff. I visited a range of classes with you to see teaching and look at pupils' work.

Context

Since the last inspection one member of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage has left the school. A new member of staff has joined the Early Years Foundation Stage team.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has focused attention firmly on improving the quality of teaching. This has already made a difference. Leaders have ensured that teachers have received useful training in improving the quality of marking and feedback. As a result, teachers are providing clear 'next steps' for pupils. Importantly, leaders and teachers check that pupils are acting on this advice. Work in exercise books shows that these actions are helping pupils, including the more able, to make better progress. Leaders have adjusted the organisation of the school day, so that there is a 'soft start' in the morning. This provides time for pupils to respond to teachers' marking or to tackle a more difficult task. Pupils are responding keenly to teachers' higher expectations and understand what they need to do to improve. As one pupil said, 'I like the challenges set by teachers'.

Leaders have ensured that there are greater opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. In addition, there is a rigorous focus on improving spelling. This is enabling pupils to develop their writing skills more securely.

The school's action plan sets out the priorities for improvement identified in the last inspection. However, it does not identify how the success of actions will be measured precisely enough. For example, it does not include milestones at which the progress made by different groups of pupils can be measured. This makes it difficult for senior leaders and governors to check the impact of actions on improving pupils' achievement.

The headteacher and senior leaders have acted quickly to ensure that there is support in place for middle leaders to improve their skills. Subject leaders have benefited from observing teaching and carrying out book checks alongside senior leaders, to check the effectiveness of teaching. They are now more confidently diagnosing what teachers need to do to improve. They have given teachers helpful feedback about strengths and areas for development. Subject leaders value the opportunities provided by senior leaders to share and model good practice.

Leaders have taken effective action to improve attendance. A parents' evening has taken place to make clear the school's expectations and to emphasise the link between good attendance and successful achievement. More rewards are being given to pupils whose attendance has increased. Information provided by the school shows that attendance has improved, when compared to last year. However, the school does not track the attendance of different groups of pupils closely enough, so that the impact of actions can be fully evaluated and reported to governors.

Governors have begun to ask more challenging questions of the school's leaders. They have introduced a new committee which will scrutinise the link between teachers' pay and performance more closely. An external review of governance has taken place. Governors say that this has been helpful in identifying the actions they need to take to develop their skills, so that they are able to check the impact of actions taken by leaders more rigorously. They have begun to develop their understanding of information about pupils' achievement and to link this to the quality of teaching. However, they acknowledge that they need to do more, in order to hold leaders fully to account for the progress that different groups of pupils are making.

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 school has commissioned an external advisor who has provided effective training to develop middle leaders' skills and update safeguarding procedures. The Archdiocese of Westminster has provided helpful support to develop the school's pay policy. Until recently, the local authority has provided light touch support. The local authority link adviser brokered an external review of governance, which clearly identified a range of necessary improvements. Support from the local authority has been increased and is now providing greater levels of challenge and support for school leaders. Further support from the local authority to strengthen governance and sharpen the school's action plan has been agreed.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Ealing and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster.

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector