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5 July 2014

Miss V Fraher  
The Interim Headteacher  
St Edward's RC Primary School  
Lisson Grove  
London  
NW1 6LH

Dear Miss Fraher

**Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of St Edward's RC Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 2014 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in May 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weakness designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Westminster and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster.

Yours sincerely

Marcia Headon  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2013**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by making sure that all staff:
  - make the purpose of lessons clear to pupils so they know what they are expected to learn
  - have high expectations of what pupils can do and plan tasks which make them think hard, especially the more able
  - spend less time talking to the whole class and give pupils more time to work by themselves to apply the skills they have been taught
  - move lessons along at a brisker pace
  - provide clear guidance in their marking on how pupils can improve their work which is linked to National Curriculum levels and the aims of lessons
  - ensure pupils act on the guidance given to them in the marking of their work.
- Raise achievement, especially in writing at Key Stage 2, by:
  - showing pupils, in imaginative ways, how to extend their writing skills
  - encouraging pupils to write for a wide range of reasons and at length
  - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to use their writing skills in different subjects.
- Ensure that leaders and managers:
  - forge stronger relationships with parents so that they are more involved in their children's learning
  - improve action planning to bring about more rapid improvements, especially in writing
  - fully implement the revised performance management systems to link teachers' rewards more closely to the quality of their teaching.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 4 July 2104**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the interim headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the leaders with responsibility for literacy and numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members of the governing body, two parents and two representatives from the local authority. The inspector observed six part lessons, all jointly with a member of the leadership team. In lessons, the inspector talked to pupils and viewed their work. The inspector viewed the school's latest self-evaluation document, considered a wide variety of documentary evidence of actions taken by the school to promote improvement, and discussed the achievement information from across the school. The single central register, which contains checks on the appointment of staff, was reviewed.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection three teachers have left the school and three have joined. Three new governors have been recruited. A permanent headteacher has been appointed, who will take up her post in September 2014.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The interim headteacher has continued to provide strong and energetic leadership to the school and has given it a sense of direction and purpose. She has maintained a very strong focus upon improving the quality of teaching and learning and has set very high expectations for the staff. They have risen to this challenge well and teaching is much improved and some is of high quality in the Nursery. The interim headteacher's very systematic approach has secured strong improvement and the school is now well placed to make further strides under the leadership of the new permanent headteacher.

The school now has a stable senior team who provides incisive leadership. The members are strong role models, have a very accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have had a positive impact upon improving the quality of teaching. They conduct regular checks to ensure that teaching is leading to effective learning and they hold staff tightly to account for the quality of their work.

The middle leaders have also developed well in their role and are having a considerable impact. They have revised the content of what is taught, reviewed and updated policies, and they check the quality of teaching. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and the judgements of the headteacher and deputy headteacher on the teaching and learning observed during the visit and on the quality of the work completed over time agreed with those of the inspector.

The process of performance management across the school is now far more robust. The link with the quality of teaching is now evident, with teachers being set meaningful targets which have been followed up through mid-year reviews, scrutiny of pupils' work, reviews of progress information as well as classroom observation.

The school's information, which shows pupils' attainment and progress, indicates that, in all year groups, pupils are making good progress. This was borne out by the work seen in pupils' books. The results of the recent phonic screening check, taken in Year 1, which assesses understanding of letters and sounds, have improved on last year and are well above the national average for 2013. Current information indicates that the school is on track to meet its targets for attainment in the Year 6 national tests. Both the school's information on pupils' progress and the work seen in their books show that pupils' progress is accelerating. Pupils who have had additional government funding have made similar progress to other pupils. This funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.

Following a skills audit, the governing body has been strengthened by the addition of new members. Through its revised committee structure it has increased the level of challenge which it is giving to the school. It has taken its role very seriously, has had a considerable amount of training and has addressed the points highlighted about leadership in the last report. It asks searching questions of leaders and members are paying much more regular visits to the school to inform themselves about its work. It has a good understanding of the progress which pupils are making and of the effect of the spending of additional funding provided by the government.

The school has made enough progress for the likely removal of the serious weakness designation. I am recommending that the next inspection be a full section 5 inspection.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The coaching given to teachers by senior staff is helping to improve the quality of teaching and to improve pupils' progress. Programmes have been individually designed to address weaknesses and there is very thorough follow up to ensure that teachers are given further support where needed.
- Staff meetings are used to model good practice. Senior and middle leaders are instrumental in demonstrating the most effective methods of teaching.
- The emphasis which is placed on improving teachers' planning means there is more consistency in the work set for groups of pupils. Middle leaders check the planning of teachers in their subject areas and this has improved the quality of teaching.
- Leaders insist that all teachers explain the purpose of lessons and ensure that pupils know if they have been successful. There are regular reminders of these

features during lessons and, as a result, pupils understand much more clearly what it is they are learning and how successful they are being in achieving the outcomes.

- Teachers have received training in improving their questioning skills. As a result they now probe much more deeply than before and make pupils think about links across the curriculum. In a literacy session in Year 6, for example, the teacher challenged pupils to recall what they had learned about the banana trade and how this was relevant to the situation of the poor in Brazil. Teachers regularly check for understanding during lessons and provide highly individualised support when pupils are less certain.
- Across the school, the introduction of a set time for writing each week has ensured that there has been a major focus on developing writing. The increased range of audiences for whom the pupils are writing and the greater variety of writing tasks set for pupils, such as devising poems, postcards, posters, stories and notes for debates, are improving pupils' writing skills and their imaginations.
- The school has insisted upon better presentation in books. This has increased the pupils' pride in their work and has made them much more aware of the need to set out their work neatly.
- The revision to the curriculum has made it much more interesting for pupils. Topics which are more relevant to pupils have been introduced and pupils are enjoying the increased extra-curricular visits which have extended their learning. New resources, especially books and equipment for the Nursery, are having a positive impact on standards. This is evident in the Nursery where children were enthusiastically working on a medieval theme using new play and counting equipment.
- The work of the Parents, Pupil and Governor Partnership Committee, along with the support provided by the Parent Teacher Association, is ensuring much improved communication between parents and school. Newsletters are now much more informative about the curriculum and events at school, such as the parent workshops on the curriculum. Any response from the school is now much quicker and parents feel much more involved with their children's learning.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Marking is now much better, regularly completed and contains advice to pupils on how they can improve. However, pupils do not always follow up on guidance and, consequently, mistakes are perpetuated. For example, in one piece of work the teacher had commented that the pupil's use of capital letters was inaccurate and had shown the pupil how this should be done correctly, but the next piece of work contained the same mistakes.
- Teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging work, especially for the most able pupils. In a Year 4 mathematics session, for example, two boys had evidently understood about shapes, but the teacher did not provide more challenging work, only more of the same type. Likewise, in a literacy session, some more able pupils knew about similes, but they were then given more work on similes which did not extend their learning.

- Pupils do not always form their letters well and this sometimes goes uncorrected by teachers. Consequently, the quality of handwriting in the school is not as high as it might be.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide good support for the school. It has conducted monitoring visits to the school every two months to check progress against the action plan. Recently the authority undertook a third whole-school review to evaluate the progress made since the previous section 5. Since January 2014 it has reduced its support as the school has grown stronger and more able to be self-sustaining.