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Mr John McManus
Headteacher
St Mary's & St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Upper Nidd Street
Leeds Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD3 9ND

Dear Mr McManus

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary's & St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 April 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:

- Improve the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop better children's understanding of the world and expressive arts and design, so that they bring these experiences to their writing from the outset. Through this, leaders should also strengthen the links between the Nursery and Reception classes.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. I held a telephone meeting with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. You accompanied me on a tour of the school when we visited classrooms, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work, particularly their writing.

Main findings

You have taken appropriate and timely action to address the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. Actions taken prior to and following the inspection have resulted in a number of positive outcomes at the end of the academic year and led to a positive start to the autumn term. Nevertheless, your action plan needs some redrafting so that all are clear about what you expect to achieve and how you will do it. By including specific outcomes for pupil achievement, the governing body can check and challenge the school's progress more robustly.

Your decision to move teachers to different year groups ensures that each phase has at last one effective role model to lead and support the improvements needed. You have combined this with targeted support and training for staff to further improve the quality of teaching.

The close working partnership of the English and mathematics subject leaders and the special educational needs co-ordinator means some of the generic weaknesses in teaching that are limiting pupils' learning and progress are being tackled effectively. You are clear that teaching within the classroom must meet the needs of different groups of pupils to enable good progress and there is less reliance on withdrawing pupils from lessons to complete specific pieces of work. For instance, during visits to lessons, pupils were seen using resources in mathematics which helped to deepen their understanding of number and shape. Focused teaching for smaller groups was challenging the most able and supporting the least able effectively. In most classes, we saw that teachers marking is helping individual pupils address misconceptions, correct errors and improve their work. The increased rigour in the way that you are making checks, tackling underachievement and holding staff to account means that any underperformance is being challenged and dealt with swiftly.

You have reviewed the curriculum to ensure there are more purposeful links to writing. This was seen in your curriculum plans, classroom displays and pupils' work. Although this is at an early stage of development, it is starting to address some of the issues identified in your analysis of pupils' writing. The use of first hand experiences is helping pupils to improve their writing and focused teaching means they are benefitting from this. For instance, in an English lesson, pupils were developing their understanding of effective questioning in preparation for a visit. The teacher's questioning challenged them to think about what they need and want to

know. From this, they understood how asking the right type of question can enhance their learning. However, we agreed that improvements are needed in the Early Years Foundation Stage to support and enrich children's early writing by improving teaching and provision in the areas of understanding of the world and expressive arts and design. Better use must be made of the outdoor environment and stronger links forged between the Nursery and Reception classes.

The review of the governing body is underway; nevertheless, no time has been wasted in improving the level of challenge. A small school improvement committee has been established. This group of governors meets regularly with you and other leaders to monitor progress with the action plan and the subsequent impact. This group is able to provide the level of challenge needed while the governing body is developed further.

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 make use of partnerships within the Catholic diocese and local schools to develop the curriculum and assessment and to improve teaching. It is clear that you value these partnerships but, it is difficult to assess the impact of this work at this stage. The local authority provides an external view of the work of the school by monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions and providing challenge. It is of the view that you took appropriate action prior to inspection and the improved outcomes in 2014 indicate the effectiveness of these actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector