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12 November 2014

Mrs Moira Dales
Acting headteacher
St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary School
Tewkesbury Close
Burleigh Road
Nottingham
NG2 5ND

Dear Mrs Dales

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 11 November 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in February 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The academy is not making enough progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The proprietor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

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 South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust, the Chair of the Interim Executive Committee, the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire local authority, and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer

Her Majesty's Inspector

- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] – for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers use accurate information about pupils' attainment and progress to plan lessons that meet the needs of the most-able pupils, particularly in writing
 - teachers' marking provides all pupils with high quality feedback, so that pupils know exactly what they need to do improve their work and they respond to marking by making corrections or extending their work, in order to increase the progress they make
 - pupils have increased opportunities to use their writing targets across all subjects in order to improve their ability to apply their developing skills more accurately
 - teachers have training and development focused on meeting the needs of the most-able pupils.

- Provide for the most-able pupils so that they make rapid progress and reach the higher levels in English by:
 - ensuring work is challenging enough to raise achievement further in reading and writing so that more pupils reach level 6
 - tracking this group of pupils more closely and acting quickly to address any underachievement across Key Stage 2.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - developing a strong culture of checking the quality of teaching and learning rigorously so that leaders have a more accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - ensuring performance management targets for all leaders and teachers are robust and that targets are focused on improving the quality of teaching and the progress of all pupils
 - ensuring senior and middle leaders' plans for improvement are linked carefully to ambitious and measureable outcomes
 - ensuring processes for tracking pupils' progress are used more systematically to hold teachers to account
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring governors check the quality of leaders' work more rigorously so that they are able to challenge underperformance quickly
 - ensuring that governors develop a more robust system for linking pay progression to the performance management of teachers and school leaders so that they are able to assess the quality of teaching and leadership more accurately.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 November 2014

Evidence

The inspector met with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders of the academy, the Chair of the Interim Executive Committee (IEC), the Chair of the South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust, and representatives of the academy's parent forum. The inspector also held conversations with several groups of pupils on the playground, during their morning break; and a number of parents and carers at the end of the day, as they collected their children from the playground. The inspector observed children learning and checked work in pupils' books. He also checked the academy's single central record of staff suitability checks, and a range of other documentation related to the academy's work, including the proprietor's statement of action, and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching. The inspection focused on how well the academy is addressing the areas for improvement, identified at the time of its last full inspection, in February 2014.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, in June 2014, there have been a number of significant contextual changes. The headteacher resigned from her post, very recently, with immediate effect. The school continues to be led by an acting headteacher. Since the resignation of the headteacher, the proprietors have arranged for the acting headteacher to increase the proportion of time she is based at St Edmund Campion School to 90%. The previous Chair of the South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust has moved to a new role. A new Chair was elected in September 2014. Three teachers have left the academy and two new teachers have joined. Three teachers continue to be absent on maternity leave.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders are not bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching quickly enough, to remove this school from a category of concern, within the designated timescale of 18 months. The acting headteacher has appropriately high expectations of staff and has begun to develop the skills of other leaders in the school. However, until very recently, leadership commitments in her own school have meant that she has not been in the academy often enough to drive change, and improvement, at a sufficient pace.

Leaders have worked together effectively to establish a clear picture of the quality of teaching across the academy, and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. They have identified what each teacher needs to do to improve the quality of their work. However, leaders are not checking rigorously enough whether teachers are acting on their development points, in order to teach more effectively. It is imperative that the quality of teaching is improved by leaders as quickly as possible, to halt the slide in the amount of progress pupils make in Key

Stage 2. End of Key Stage results, including the latest 2014 data, show that pupils' progress from the end of Year 2, to the end of Year 6, in reading, writing and mathematics, has declined sharply and consistently over a period of three years.

Representatives of the IEC have visited the school frequently to check its work. For example, visits have been made to check the quality of teachers' planning, work in pupils' books, and to check the academy's assessment system. As a result, representatives of the IEC have developed a stronger understanding of the academy's work. However, the IEC is not challenging the academy's leaders about the performance, and improved progress, of different groups of pupils well enough. This is largely because there are insufficient targets in the statement of action to enable them to check whether pupils are on track.

The academy's single central record of staff suitability checks has been updated appropriately since the last monitoring visit, to include new members of staff appointed to the academy. The necessary checks have been made on these staff to help keep pupils safe.

The views of parents and carers about the academy are mixed, with equal proportions of parents and carers expressing positive and negative views about the quality of the academy's leadership.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The academy's systems to track pupils' progress reliably have improved. Staff are now tracking the progress of different groups of pupils in increased depth. This is underpinned by teachers' improved skills and confidence in assessing pupils' attainment accurately.
- Pupils' comments indicate that teaching is beginning to provide increased challenge. For example, a group of pupils in Key Stage 2 told the inspector, 'We are not allowed to spend as much time colouring in pictures, in our work, as we used to, and the teachers are making us do more work than before.'
- Work in pupils' writing books in Key Stage 1 is showing promising signs of improvement, due to improved challenge and higher expectations of teachers.
- A parent forum has been established since the last monitoring visit, as planned. Representatives of the parent forum have met on two occasions with the school's leaders, including the acting headteacher and the Chair of the IEC. Representatives of the parents' forum report that they feel their views are valued and appreciated by the academy's leaders.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- There is still too much of a miss-match between the ability of pupils and the level of challenge in their work in some classes, particularly in Key Stage 2. The most-able pupils, in particular, are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils

often say that they find work easy, especially in mathematics. Their books are frequently filled with ticks from teachers to acknowledge their work is correct, with little evidence of work which has really challenged their thinking.

- Work in pupils' books, in Upper Key Stage 2, shows that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low. The quantity of work in pupils' books is often lacking, despite being well into the autumn term.
- Opportunities are missed in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes to develop children's early language skills. For example, through promotion of the use of ambitious vocabulary. Leaders have rightly identified that providing increased opportunities for children to develop language skills when learning outdoors is another area for development. This lack of challenge is reflected in pupils' outcomes, at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, which show that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 is simply not good enough.

External support

The proprietors have failed to ensure that the academy has made sufficient progress since the last monitoring visit. The statement of action continues to not be fit for purpose. It does not contain sufficient measures to enable the Interim Executive Committee to evaluate whether the school's actions to accelerate pupils' progress are having enough impact. Although termly pupil progression targets are included in the statement of action for pupils in Year 6, they are not included for pupils in other year groups. The statement of action has been improved since the last monitoring visit and now provides sufficient clarity about who will be responsible for leading each action, and who will monitor its implementation. The proprietors have agreed to submit the revised statement of action to Her Majesty's Inspectors by 30 November 2014.

The Proprietors are beginning to plan how they will organise the transition from an Interim Executive Board, to oversee the work of the academy, back to a local governing body. Their plan for doing this will be checked at the time of the next monitoring visit.