

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment
Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566850

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: dmccarrick@cfbt.com



6 November 2014

Mr Dominic Vernon
Headteacher
St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School
Milnthorpe Road
Chapel Lane
Burtonwood
Warrington
Cheshire
WA5 4PN

Dear Mr Vernon

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School, Warrington

Following my visit to your school on 5 November 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 June 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 governors have opportunities to independently evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and achievement in the school
- quickly improve the skills and expertise of subject leaders so they are better able to drive improvement in their area.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and with two of your subject leaders. We looked at examples of teachers' marking and I made short visits to each class with your deputy headteacher and spoke to pupils about their work. I also scrutinised documentation including the school improvement plan and your records relating to improving the quality of teaching. I met with three representatives of the governing body as well as with two advisers from the local authority and the archdiocese.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, a new parent governor has been appointed. Leaders have increased the security of the school site through the installation of perimeter fencing.

Main findings

You have established a very clear vision for school improvement and this is shared by staff and governors. You have made immediate changes to the deployment of the majority of your teaching staff, particularly in Key Stage 2. This has ensured that all teachers now engage together in a professional dialogue about how to improve learning in the classroom. You have set very clear targets for teachers' appraisal and have effectively used a range of information to evaluate each individual's performance. As a consequence, not all teachers who could have, received a pay progression award this year. At the same time, you have provided teachers with opportunities to visit and observe practice in good and outstanding schools. They have also reviewed books and marking from other schools. All of which, have raised teachers' expectations of just how much they and their pupils can achieve, and have left them in no doubt that they will be held to account for their work.

It is evident that teachers' are now assessing pupils' work and progress with greater care. They are following a new system, based on the revised national curriculum, and this is ensuring that they report on pupils' progress using a broader range of evidence. Teachers' marking has improved overall, although you recognise that there are still inconsistencies in the detail of the feedback pupils receive and also in how it then encourages pupils to improve their work. Workbooks show that pupils are starting to respond positively to the new handwriting scheme although it is too soon for this to be embedded across all classes.

Subject leaders have written action plans for their areas of responsibility. These identify aspects of support teachers will need in order to effectively deliver the new curriculum. They also briefly outline how they will check teachers' work. They now have the time and opportunity to carry out their roles in monitoring improvement in their subjects. However, their experience varies considerably and they are not

currently driving improvement at the classroom level. This is limiting the rate of improvement in the school.

Governors have recently formed a standards committee and this is ably supported by advisers from the local authority and archdiocese. They are able to ask probing questions of the data they receive, however they recognise that they remain largely reliant on the information you give them in meetings. While they take an active role in the life of the school and visit it regularly they need to support in using this information for monitoring school improvement.

External support

The local authority and archdiocesan advisers have recently been allocated to the school and they work together well to plan the support the school needs. The local authority categorises the school as a priority school and, as a result, has allocated it additional adviser time and resources. Both advisers are building leadership capacity at a governing body level by attending meetings and supporting governors to ask the right questions and provide a greater level of challenge. You have also sought the support of colleague headteachers in enabling teachers to learn from best practice elsewhere. These connections have had a clear impact on teachers' expectations and practice.

I am copying this letter to William Garner, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Warrington and to Tim Warren, the Director for Schools and Colleges in the archdiocese of Liverpool.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector