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7 November 2014

Mrs Catherine Murphy
Headteacher
Saint Winefride's Catholic Primary School
Britannia Street
Shepshed
Loughborough
LE12 9AE

Dear Mrs Murphy

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Saint Winefride's Catholic Primary School, Shepshed, Leicestershire

Following my visit to your academy on 6 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 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 academy should take further action to:

- ensure all those with a leadership responsibility play their full part in driving improvement
- formalise the plan for the support to be offered to the academy by the multi-academy trust and the diocese.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a representative of the diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy's action plan and other leadership documents were evaluated including the recorded outcomes of monitoring activities. A short visit was made to every classroom, accompanied by the headteacher.

Context

There have been changes to the context of the academy since the last monitoring inspection. The headteacher left the academy at the end of the summer term. An acting headteacher took up their post at the start of the autumn term and was then appointed as the substantive headteacher on 14 October 2014. Three class teachers have left the school, two of whom shared one post. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed. A temporary class teacher has also been appointed.

Main findings

You have quickly formed an accurate picture of what the academy needs to do to improve and wasted no time in establishing a strong strategic steer for its work. The improvement planning you have put in place identifies appropriately ambitious and measurable targets and points in time to check on the success of the actions you are taking. Expectations of what pupils should achieve have risen.

You are giving clear and accurate information to the governing body, leaders of the multi-academy trust and to the diocese about the academy's work. Your evaluations of the success of the improvement actions being taken are helping members of the governing body to improve their knowledge of the academy's work and the way they do their job of holding academy leaders to account.

You have made sure that the assessments made by teachers of how well pupils are learning are accurate and that teachers are using this information more effectively to plan work that challenges pupils to make better progress. You are also using this information to set targets for teachers and other leaders in school so you can hold them to account for their performance. Appropriate training and support for teachers is being provided. You are making sure that everyone in the academy is clear about what is expected of them. Expectations for setting pupil targets, the quality of their handwriting and the presentation of work are clear and non-negotiable. As a result improvements are beginning to be seen.

The impact of leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of new members to the senior leadership team. These senior leaders carry out checks on teaching and provide support and challenge to colleagues to help them to improve. However, not all of those with a leadership responsibility are demonstrating that they are making as much impact on improvements at the academy as they should.

The achievement of pupils appears to have shown some improvement in 2014. However, some of the information about how well pupils have achieved has been based on unreliable information. You have made sure that this information is now accurate and that it is checked often so that any problems are spotted quickly and swiftly dealt with. You have recognised that there is still too much inconsistency in pupils' achievement between subjects and groups of pupils across the school. You have correctly identified the areas in which pupil performance is still not good enough and put in place targets and additional support to rectify this.

The number of pupils achieving the expected level in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 and in Year 2 has been unacceptably low for too long. Swift action has now been taken to rectify shortcomings in the quality of teaching of the sounds that letters make. A good start has been made to improving the way that children learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You are modelling expectations here and closely monitoring the progress being made.

You have quite rightly set about a thorough review and up-date of the policies and procedures adopted in the academy, particularly those to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

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

Plans for the support to help drive improvements at the academy provided by the multi-academy trust and the diocese have yet to be formalised. Your enthusiasm to promote opportunities to work with a range of external partners and consultants to identify and address weaknesses with urgency has helped to ensure that this work is well under way. The findings of an external review of governance are to be revisited in order to determine whether this was a useful exercise and has had a positive impact on academy improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school is a non-maintained special school [hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk]