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Miss Angela Hewkin  
Headteacher  
St Francis Catholic and Church of England (Aided) Primary School  
Newport Road  
Ventnor  
PO38 1BQ

Dear Miss Hewkin

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Francis Catholic and Church of England (Aided) Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 December 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The visit focused on pupils' achievement over the last year and how effectively leaders monitor teaching and pupils' progress. Given the number of disadvantaged pupils in the school, and the substantial amount of extra funding the school receives to support these pupils, the visit also examined their achievement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- work with Hampshire local authority to analyse tests and teachers' assessments so that all leaders, including governors, are entirely clear about the strengths and weaknesses in achievement, what constitutes good progress, and the extent to which it is being achieved
- improve leaders' monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, ensuring a sharp, in-depth focus on evaluating the learning of different groups, particularly the disadvantaged pupils

- work with Hampshire local authority to identify one or more schools where the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is outstanding so that the leadership team can see highly effective practice in action
- work with Hampshire to strengthen governors' knowledge of the effectiveness of teaching and achievement, and develop their capacity to provide the degree of challenge expected of governors.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of Hampshire local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's plan for improvement was evaluated together with records from leaders' monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. Together, we made short visits to five lessons.

## **Main findings**

In response to the first monitoring inspection, the senior leadership team has broadened the strategies for monitoring the quality of teaching, including scrutiny of pupils' work. The team has compiled a lot of information, from analysis of national tests and teachers' assessments, to check pupils' achievement. Such activities are entirely appropriate, to give leaders and governors a true picture of what teaching is typically like, and to identify any aspects that need to improve further.

While these activities are the right ones, there are significant shortcomings in the way they are carried out that limit their effectiveness. The prompt sheet used by leaders to judge teaching focuses on what the teacher is doing, as opposed to how well pupils are learning. As a result, records of lesson observations do not provide convincing evidence to support leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching.

Leaders' monitoring of pupils' work lacks detailed analysis. The records highlight some helpful pointers as to how teaching can be improved but, again, too little consideration is given to the quality of pupils' learning and whether their progress in lessons, and over time, is good enough. Leaders are not examining, as a matter of routine, whether there are any discrepancies in learning for more able pupils, those with special educational needs or pupils supported through the extra government funding (pupil premium).

The leadership team have received support on analysing and using data relating to pupils' attainment and progress from Hampshire local authority, through their linked partner. However, leaders do not have a clear, shared understanding of exactly what constitutes expected, or average, progress as opposed to good progress in each year. Their definitions changed significantly between the beginning and end of this monitoring visit and therefore presented a confusing picture. Distinguishing between

expected progress and good progress is of paramount importance in judging to what extent pupils' achievement is becoming consistently good across the school.

The information from tests and teachers' assessments is not yet analysed in enough depth to pinpoint strong and weaker areas for different groups of pupils. The school's current plan for improvement lacks specific targets for pupils' progress, with clear timelines so that leaders can check that weaker areas are improving quickly and on track. Unvalidated results for 2014 showed that disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were over a year behind the non-disadvantaged pupils in the school. Only 58% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected level in all three areas of reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 94% of non-disadvantaged pupils. These gaps were too wide. The information from the school shows disadvantaged pupils are falling behind in other classes, yet clear actions and targets to boost these pupils' progress do not feature prominently in the school's improvement plan, and they should.

Governors hold the view that the school is improving and well on the way to being judged good. The weaknesses in how data, teaching and, particularly, pupils' progress, are monitored and analysed raise questions as to how they know this view is accurate. As things currently stand, the evidence is not convincing.

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**

The local authority has provided support for leaders in analysing data and monitoring pupils' work. This has not had enough impact in improving the capacity of leaders to monitor the school's work effectively. No members of the governing body attended the training on governance, in January 2014, organised by Hampshire local authority in conjunction with Her Majesty's Inspectors.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Isle of Wight, Winchester Diocese and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**