

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 566857

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jkinsman@cfbt.com



12 December 2014

Mrs Catherine McDonald
Headteacher
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Eden Way
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS4 2TF

Dear Mrs McDonald

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors responsible 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 improvement planning includes greater detail about how the school's performance will be monitored and evaluated
- provide greater detail in the measurable targets about the progress all pupils need to make, so that leaders and governors can judge the school's success over-time more accurately.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your senior leaders, a group of pupils, governors and representatives of the local authority and diocese. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school improvement plan and data tracking pupils' progress. In addition, I undertook a tour of the school, visiting classrooms, talking

with staff and speaking with pupils.

Context

The school has recently recruited three new teachers. A new leadership structure is in place including the introduction of a deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher roles. In addition, two new parent governors have been elected.

Main findings

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the challenges the school faces and the urgency required to address them. Leaders have responded with targeted actions focused on improving outcomes for pupils. Staff, governors and pupils report that the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is because you have fostered a change in the culture of the school. Staff feel they are increasingly challenged, supported, and better able to support each other. They have a clearer understanding of what needs to be done to improve. Actions being taken are beginning to make a difference in the classrooms as seen in the better progress pupils' are making. For example, a review of marking and teachers' responses to pupils' work has led to clearer feedback being given to pupils on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils say they have a better understanding of the next steps they need to take to progress their learning and know what to do if they need extra help. In addition, systems for holding teachers to account and tracking pupils' progress are sharper with a tighter focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Targets set for teachers to measure their performance are directly linked to school improvement priorities and the progress pupils are making. New systems for recording and tracking the progress pupils are making are in place and teachers are better at using data to inform their planning, targeting interventions and seeing what difference those interventions are making. The school has appointed a significant number of new staff since the last inspection. You have put in place induction, mentoring and support for these staff to ensure that the recent changes and improvements are sustained.

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have undertaken well-targeted actions which are beginning to make a difference. This is because the plan of action rightly emphasises improvements in teaching and learning whilst focussing upon best practice in mathematics, phonics and spelling and ensuring consistency as pupils move between year groups. Staff, pupils and governors have all contributed to the development of the plan. In addition, you have recognised other emerging priorities. In early years, for example, you have taken prompt action to develop the curriculum provision including outdoor play and active learning. A local authority review suggests that the quality provision has improved as a result. A recent review of the impact of the actions taken has been carried out by you and your governors and the next steps are being considered. Current planning lacks sufficient clarity about allocations of key staff and which governors are responsible for monitoring the progress being made by the school. The targets by which improvements can be

measured make reference to the rate of progress the pupils can make, but more detail is required, including targets for the accelerated progress pupils and groups of pupils need to make, so that governors can evaluate the impact of your actions more accurately.

Governors understand the challenges the school is facing, along with the need for rapid and accelerated improvement. As a result, they have created additional leadership capacity in the school with the appointment of a deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and the restructuring and clarification of other leadership roles. Governors have sharpened recruitment systems to try and ensure good quality appointments across the school. They have also raised their level of challenge to school leaders supported by improved access to on-line governor training including early years and safeguarding materials. Governors have been engaged with the development and review of recent actions to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. As a result they have recognised the need for more detailed and sharply focussed targets in school plans to help them evaluate how well the school is doing.

External support

The local authority knows the school well, attends governors meetings and has worked closely with school leaders to build their capacity to move the school forward. The local authority make additional visits on a regular basis to monitor the progress the school is making. The level of support is appropriate to the needs of the school. A review of pupils' mathematics books and a follow up visit to see mathematics teaching, for example, has led to the school having a more accurate view on the quality of mathematics teaching and to plan additional actions as a result.

The school works closely within a wider group of Catholic Schools, including good and outstanding schools. This has contributed to a more accurate understanding of the school's own strengths and weaknesses.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body Local authority –
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation.