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Frances Hawkes
Executive Headteacher
Regina Coeli Catholic Primary School
173 Pampisford Road
South Croydon
CR2 6DF

Dear Mrs Hawkes

Special measures monitoring inspection of Regina Coeli Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Veronica Young, Additional inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss the actions taken since the school's previous monitoring visit.

This was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2013. The areas for improvement are set out in the annex to this letter. I am of the opinion that:

The school is making reasonable progress toward to removal of special measures.

The school may appoint Newly Qualified Teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Croydon and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark.

Yours sincerely

Ann Debono
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2013

- Improve the achievement of pupils and increase the proportion of teaching that is consistently good and outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour and the work pupils produce
 - use assessment information to plan work at the right level for different groups of pupils and provide an appropriate level of challenge throughout each lesson
 - teach lessons at the right pace, motivate pupils to do well and encourage them to have positive attitudes to learning
 - provide high-quality marking and feedback that consistently supports pupils' learning.
- Strengthen the capacity of leadership and management at all levels to promote improvement by ensuring that leaders and governors:
 - implement the recommendations in the recent review of governance so that governors challenge leaders effectively and support the school to improve
 - ensure that resources, including the pupil premium, are used effectively
 - establish rigorous and accurate monitoring of all aspects of the school's work to inform the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement
 - establish effective procedures to manage the performance of staff so that all teachers and teaching assistants are accountable for improving teaching and learning
 - link their judgements on the quality of teaching seen in lessons more closely with pupils' progress and attainment
 - work more effectively with teachers to improve the quality of teaching by sharing good practice and meeting their professional development needs.

Report on the third monitoring inspection 9 and 10 December 2014

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, school leaders, governors, representatives of the local authority and parents and carers. Discussions were held with pupils and a representative of the Southwark Diocese. Inspectors visited all classes with a senior leader. Documentation was scrutinised, including pupils' work, pupils' achievement information and records about safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and attendance. The school improvement plan and the local authority statement of action were evaluated.

Context

Six teachers left at the end of the summer term; eight teachers were recruited for September. One teacher is scheduled to leave at the end of term. The interim executive board (IEB) secured a hard federation with St Elphege's School, a teaching school in Sutton. The federated governing body assumed responsibility for both schools on 1 November. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed from St Elphege's School.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' attainment is improving. More pupils now attain standards at and above national expectations, but not all. For example, those eligible for pupil premium funding in Key Stage 2 and older pupils underachieve. Pupils' progress in Year 5 and Year 6 is not rapid enough to compensate for historically poor teaching or to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in mathematics.

Children's standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage have increased further and remain above average. More children meet the expected early learning goals but too few exceed them. Results in Year 1 phonics tests are above average for a second year, rising by an additional 7%. Standards achieved by Year 2 pupils increased in reading, writing and mathematics and attainment for more-able pupils is no longer significantly below average. Pupils' outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 are inconsistent. For example, results in writing increased considerably since 2013 and results in punctuation and spelling tests were significantly above average. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at Level 4 declined.

Since September, leaders updated pupil performance tracking. They introduced regular externally moderated assessments in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress is stronger compared to the same time last year. This is because teachers' expectations are higher and they use accurate performance information to plan learning at the right level. Scrutiny of pupils' work and visits to lessons confirm that most pupils are now challenged more strongly.

Leaders maintained a broad curriculum when the school became subject to special measures. The priority was to raise standards in English and mathematics. Pupils' achievement in foundation subjects however, varies widely. Pupils make good progress through meaningful activities in some subjects, however their information and communication technology skills are weak. Pupils do not deepen their knowledge and understanding in foundation subjects sufficiently because units of work move on too quickly.

The quality of teaching

Inadequate teaching characterised by low expectations has been eradicated. Most teaching requires improvement but since the last monitoring inspection a higher proportion is good. Inconsistencies in expectations and organisation of learning remain between some parallel classes.

Teaching is more purposeful. Teachers plan lessons and set work appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils' literacy skills are improving across the school because of the strong focus on phonics and spelling. Teaching assistants in Reception and Key Stage 1 provide confident support. Children in these small groups enjoy this extra attention and quickly improve their basic skills.

Adults' questioning in lessons is stronger so they check how much pupils understand and subsequently adapt teaching to address misconceptions. Most teachers provide high-quality marking and feedback that support pupils' learning. It is most effective when pupils respond to a short moving-on prompt to demonstrate their understanding. In some classes pupils do not respond regularly. Marking in mathematics is less effective, sometimes limiting pupils' progress when teachers revert to ticking work rather than using this feedback to provide greater challenge.

Teaching motivates pupils when it is exciting and they participate fully in their learning. Year 1 science studies on light and Year 6 historical research on the Second World War were enhanced when pupils stayed late in school to experience darkness. Pupils subsequently completed high-quality extended pieces of writing. Teaching requires improvement when learning outcomes are unclear. In Reception classes some independent activities lack purpose so children engage in low-level play. The outdoor environment is messy and disorganised; activities do not promote children's imagination or develop their knowledge and language skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are well behaved and the majority show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils cooperate from a young age, they are eager to do well and they talk confidently about how the school is improving. Attendance is above average. There have been no exclusions.

Since the last monitoring inspection, leaders strengthened the school's Catholic identity and ethos. Parents and carers welcome the reintroduction of weekly Mass. Leaders' awareness and response to concerns about potentially vulnerable pupils and their families are more prominent. For example, leaders monitor behaviour and incident books regularly and take specific action for pupils in need of extra attention and support.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The new executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully taken over leadership of the school. They continue to drive improvement despite high staff mobility. Leaders draw effectively on experienced staff and resources at St Elphege's teaching school to reinforce and implement their expectations. Behaviour and standards are improving at a faster rate since September. Parents and carers confirm this to be the case and they think the school feels safer in the federation.

Many teachers are new and they receive intensive support to ensure they become good practitioners. Staff comment positively about these interventions; their performance is monitored rigorously through work scrutiny, lesson observations and progress meetings. Leaders provide immediate constructive feedback. Staff say they understand exactly what they need to do to improve before a follow-up visit within two weeks. Team leaders support teachers in between lesson observations, deploying different strategies such as modelling the required skill, hosting bespoke visits to St Elphege's School and co-planning.

School records evaluate most teaching as consistently good and sometimes better. Leaders do not refer closely enough to achievement information when assessing teaching. Some pupils are not achieving as well as they could. This means some judgements about the quality of teaching are over-generous.

Interim executive board (IEB) members were highly effective in carrying out their strategic responsibility for the school. They were determined to re-establish basic school improvement systems and to secure the appropriate long-term solution for the school's future. This rigour and continuity are sustained because a thorough phased handover occurred during the summer term and an IEB representative is now a governor.

The draft school strategic plan is very detailed, listing extensive actions to be undertaken by all leaders. It informs rigorous monitoring and evaluation that have driven the recent improvements since September. The governors' monitoring role however is not explicit and milestones to check attainment are not urgent enough, particularly for pupils in upper Key Stage 2.

External support

The Diocese brokered the federation with St Elphege's School. This arrangement with a teaching school has enabled clear progress since September. The local authority monitors the school through progress meetings and a termly review. The statement of action is not fit for purpose. It is out of date and does not indicate how the local authority intends to support the school during and beyond this final phase of removal from a category of special measures.