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6 May 2015

Ms A Pickin
Headteacher
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Adams Hill
Bartley Green
Birmingham
B32 3QD

Dear Ms Pickin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 May 2015, 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 January 2015. 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the head teacher, other senior leaders, the chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. The inspector visited a number of classes jointly with a senior leader to sample teaching. The inspector scrutinized examples of pupils' mathematics work and minutes of the Governing Body.

Main findings

The changes to staff structure that commenced in the autumn term allow middle leaders to take greater responsibility for pupil progress. The current arrangement with an acting deputy, and acting assistant head teacher, is likely to continue in the medium term. School leaders know precisely what still needs to improve in mathematics and reading comprehension. More work is necessary to consolidate a root-and-branch change to the way mathematics is taught.

This new approach to mathematics runs throughout the school. It aims to ensure that pupils fully understand the principles of mathematics, and so can apply them confidently in new problem solving contexts. Teachers are all trying to implement the approach. They have lesson activities and resources that accommodate the full range of learning needs of a class. As yet, these differentiated tasks are not deployed fluently enough to maximise individual pupil progress in lessons. This is most evident in whole-class teaching.

Teachers are marking work accurately, with signs that developmental comments for pupils are resulting in a useful response from the majority of pupils. Sometimes, the pupils responses are not subsequently checked. Teachers are trying to develop pupils' self-assessment skills, using techniques such as peer assessment. This may have long-term benefits, but there are examples of pupils incorrectly 'marking' work that has subsequently gone unnoticed.

The external review of governance has not yet been carried out. The schools' action plan does address the key areas for development but does not include pupil outcome 'targets' within the plan; that data is available separately. It is not therefore easy to evaluate the impact of the actions that are taking place on pupil outcomes. The records of governors meetings, and the summary reports by school leaders to the governing body, are not evaluative enough to form an impression of how well, or otherwise, the school is tackling the key issues. There are, however, comprehensive pupil attainment and progress information available to all leaders and governors that tracks performance over time for each class and group of learners. This would further benefit by being compared with national figures.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. HMI were unable to meet with the full governing body. HMI may return in the autumn term to attend a governing body meeting and review progress in mathematics.

External support

The local authority has brokered a link with a teaching school. The head teacher of that school is supporting leadership at St Peters. In combination with an existing local cluster of schools, useful teacher training activities are taking place. These include opportunities of staff to see outstanding practice, and work in partnership

with good practitioners to develop their teaching skills. The local authority is providing governor training.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese
- Director of Children's Services for Birmingham