

Tribal  
Kings Orchard  
1 Queens Street  
Bristol, BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5307  
**Email:** rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com



13 May 14, 2015

Ms Angelina John  
Headteacher  
St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School  
Bonner Road  
London  
E2 9JY

Dear Ms John

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 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. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection.

The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure the school's safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements.
  
- ensure the strategic plan:
  - is revised to include specific milestones to ensure rapid improvement to pupils' attainment and progress
  - regularly analyses pupils' performance to track the achievement of different pupil groups throughout school
  - includes information about how governors will monitor and evaluate the school's progress against priorities for improvement
  - identifies strategies to reduce pupils' persistent absence from school
  - is used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of support for pupils' with additional needs in order to reduce exclusions from school.
  - ensure priorities for improvement are suitably resourced both financially and from other sources.

- The local authority should ensure that:
  - a strategic plan is formulated that addresses immediate priorities for improvement and how it will support and challenge the school on its longer term journey of improvement.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss actions taken since the last inspection. The school development plan was evaluated. Brief visits were made to most classes. During visits to lessons, the inspector spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. A range of documentation was scrutinised including records of governing body meetings, pupil performance information, the school's statutory policies and the single central record.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection one nursery nurse has left the school, two members of assistant staff are on sick leave, a Year 5 class is taught by an agency teacher. The Governing Body has been re-constituted to 14 governors.

### **Main findings**

Judged to require improvement in consecutive inspections, the school has not effectively addressed the identified areas for improvement. These include the quality of marking and assessment, pupils' progress in writing and the rigour with which leaders secure improvement against its stated priorities. The school is not making rapid enough progress over time and additional factors, identified during this monitoring visit, require urgent attention.

Since the inspection the headteacher has increased checks on the school's overall effectiveness. Leaders' analysis of this evidence is beginning to direct their work and to challenge the pace of change. Staff expectations about pupils' achievement are starting to rise. Intensive support has been provided to improve practice in classrooms. Leaders and governors, with support from the local authority, are implementing stringent monitoring programmes when performance falls short of expected standards. After a period of high staff turnover, key senior leadership appointments are beginning to help the headteacher to function more strategically. Middle leaders are keen to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in school improvement. Since the inspection they evaluate teaching and learning more frequently. They are beginning to hold difficult conversations to challenge the status quo of less effective practice, still too evident in school.

The headteacher has introduced a new system to track pupils' academic performance. This system reveals that a significant majority of pupils across the school are failing to meet expectations. Most pupils achieve well below expected standards given their ages and starting points. For example, more able writers in Year 6 this year have been set Level 5 targets below those attained in 2014. The figure agreed by governors is 17.5% which is well below the 33% national average. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is not closing fast

enough. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows progress is too slow and marking is inconsistent. Only a minority of pupils respond to adults' comments and make subsequent improvement. In the sample scrutinised, one pupil's project book had not been marked for over a month.

Concerns for pupils' safety and wellbeing arose during the monitoring inspection. Since September 2014, despite the school's efforts to engage with parents, there have been 140 unauthorised absences. Additionally, since the inspection in January 2015 three pupils with additional needs have been excluded from school for 16.5 days. One pupil is in receipt of a statement of special needs. These exclusions have occurred despite staff resources of up to four adults in most classrooms. The statutory policy for safeguarding is not available to parents on the website. It was not provided for the inspector during the monitoring visit. The single central record does not meet statutory requirements. Leaders and governors have been slack in setting deadlines for the return of documentation to confirm staff suitability to continue to work in school with children.

Records of governors' meetings indicate an in-year deficit of £97,000. Governors do not actively implement the policy for pupil premium funding or evaluate its impact on closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others. This attainment gap is not closing quickly enough. This was a priority for improvement identified in the last inspection.

The school's development plan lacks precision. For example, it does not indicate how pupils' progress and attainment will be accelerated, neither does it show how governors will monitor the improvements using robust milestones and timescales.

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 had brokered additional external leadership support for the school. This was effective but it ceased a year ago. Local Authority support since then has been neither robust nor challenging enough to address the necessary improvement required to ensure pupils' safety or monitor the school's essential improvement against its priorities.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Tower Hamlets.

Yours sincerely

Ann Debono  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**