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Mrs Jane Tyers
Headteacher
St Paul's CofE Primary School
Nevile Road
Salford
Greater Manchester
M7 3PT

Dear Mrs Tyers

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Paul's CofE Primary School, Salford

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 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 April 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 you, your deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Further meetings were held with a representative of the local authority, ten pupils and three members of the Governing Body, including the Chair.

I toured the school with you visiting every class and we also looked at a small sample of pupils' work in books. I evaluated the school's action plan and took into account records of monitoring activity undertaken by you, leaders and the local authority. I also took into account the 65 responses to the survey of parents undertaken by the school in early July 2015 using the same questions found in Parent View.

Context

Leaders have made two key appointments to take effect from September 2015. First, a new assistant headteacher has been appointed with additional responsibility to lead teaching and learning in English. Second, a pupil premium champion has been appointed to ensure the focus on pupils for whom the pupil premium funding is intended remains at the heart of the school's work. Furthermore, the teacher currently in charge of the Nursery class is to take lead responsibility for the early years provision in the school from September.

Main findings

Together with your leaders in school, you have taken swift action to bring about improvement. The action plan focuses on the recommendations made by inspectors and states the timescales by which success is to be achieved. Importantly, the plans make clear what success will look like and highlight who will be responsible for checking progress is being made; lines of accountability are clear. This sharpness has been used well by the deputy headteacher to make clear to subject leaders what is expected of them as they set about leading teaching and learning in their different subjects. The well-thought out and manageable calendar for monitoring enables leaders and governors to be in a stronger position than in the past to identify weaknesses and act upon them swiftly, and to celebrate strengths.

Confidence that the school is improving is shared by governors and local authority. Both you and your SENCO have shown that you expect agreed actions to be implemented in line with school policy and to a high standard. The SENCO, for example, in her wider responsibilities, has identified successfully and shared with colleagues where standards of pupils' presentation and handwriting are strongest and where improvement is needed. The result is that, overall, and as recognised by pupils with whom I spoke, presentation and pupils' pride in their work has improved since the inspection of April 2015. Also improving is pupils' use and understanding of an increasingly wide range of vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2, for example, used sentences containing words such as 'obnoxious' to describe the smell in the house of Mr and Mrs Twit.

You, personally, have shown steely resilience in challenging underperformance. For example, in your identification that the school's policy for marking is not always followed, it is clear to leaders and yourself that some pupils have not always made the gains they should have done in their learning. Your subsequent insistence that improvement must be swift is clear and understood. The expectation held by leaders and yourself that outcomes for pupils are at the heart of the school's work is shared increasingly by staff and governors. We agreed that written records of observations of lessons and scrutinies of pupils' work would be sharper if they articulated the difference teaching has made to the learning of pupils.

Pupils who spoke with me were polite and articulate. The great majority of parents responding to the recent questionnaire were positive about the school and its work. Governors share your commitment to ensuring this school becomes a good school as soon as possible. Correctly, they recognise their move to focus more on ascertaining the difference leaders across the school are making to pupils' achievement and personal development is helping them to support and challenge the school more rigorously than in the past. While no recommendation to review governance was made by inspectors, it is testament to the commitment of members that they are responding most positively to your good decision to involve them in training sessions with an external consultant to help develop and strengthen their role further.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority supports and challenges this school well. This is because its officers maintain regular contact with leaders and all engage in open and honest discussions. Records undertaken by the link officer are succinct and helpful. They identify correctly strengths and areas for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Salford and to the Anglican Diocese of Manchester.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector