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10 July 2015

Mrs M Buller
Executive Headteacher
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
Washington Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 5AA

Dear Mrs Buller

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Heidi Boreham, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 July, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

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 Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Reading and the Director of the Diocesan Education Service in the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the skills to accurately assess pupils' attainment
 - raising expectations about what all pupils, particularly those who are more able, can achieve and set tasks appropriate for their needs
 - ensuring the pace of learning in all lessons is appropriate to ensure good progress for all pupils
 - ensuring that teaching, together with additional support, enables those with special educational needs to make good progress.
- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum
 - ensuring the writing policy is consistently applied in all classes.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, to secure and sustain improvements by ensuring that:
 - procedures relating to safeguarding are urgently and consistently implemented
 - there is clear succession planning for the senior leadership of the school
 - weaknesses in teaching are eliminated rapidly, performance management is linked to achievement and checks made on the quality of teaching are robust
 - staff are given opportunities to develop their skills through a planned programme of professional development
 - rapid action is taken to monitor the progress of those who are eligible for the pupil premium to ensure that gaps are closing
 - the leadership of special educational needs is developed within the school
 - the governing body robustly holds the school to account and ensures financial probity.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 8–9 July 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with pupils, the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the English and mathematics subject leaders, the lead child protection officer, the early years leader and teacher, two members of the interim executive board (IEB), including the Chair of the IEB, and two members of the shadow governing body.

Context

The head of school was appointed in April 2015 on a temporary contract. Three part-time teachers have left the school. One full-time teacher has been appointed. The Years 3, 4 and 5 classes are currently being taught by supply teachers.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school's own information on pupils' attainment and progress shows that progress is improving. Year 6 pupils achieve well because of effective teaching. Across the school progress is variable. This is mainly because some classes have been taught by a number of different supply teachers so there has not been a consistent approach to check pupils' learning in lessons and plan appropriate activities to meet their different needs. Achievement in writing is still not as strong as in reading and mathematics. However, pupils are being provided with more opportunities to write in different subjects. They would benefit from being given more opportunities to complete longer pieces of writing using the skills they have developed in literacy lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs are mainly supported well, because teaching assistants use appropriate materials and strategies to support learning in lessons and small groups. In some classes, the progress of these pupils is similar to that of their peers but this is not always the case. Some teaching assistants do not take account of individual pupils' needs well enough. As a result, their progress is slower. Although there are programmes of support in place for pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), the gap between their attainment and that of all other pupils is still too wide. There is more to be done to accelerate their progress and enable them to achieve the levels of attainment of which they are capable.

The quality of teaching

There continues to be a high level of turbulence in teaching. Three classes in particular have been taught by a number of different supply teachers for many months. The pupils in these classes have experienced some teaching that is of poor quality. Teaching is stronger in other classes. Year 6 in particular have made good progress because the teaching is dynamic, imaginative and well planned to meet pupils' learning needs. The teacher captures pupils' interests, questions their thinking and checks their understanding during lessons, which enables them to make good progress. In this class, the new curriculum is used well to promote pupils' love of reading and encourage pupils to write across a range of subjects.

In most lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn, but sometimes this is not matched well enough to the different levels of ability of all pupils in the class. Teachers are beginning to question pupils' understanding more effectively, but in some classes the questions are too broad and not targeted to different pupils' level of ability. Consequently, some lower-ability pupils are not fully engaged during whole-class teaching and some of the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to think more deeply. At these times pupils become fidgety and lose concentration. Most teaching assistants support pupils' learning well in lessons and in small groups. Occasionally some pupils say they do not feel well supported by a few teaching assistants. This means that these pupils do not always receive the additional support they need to make better progress.

The English subject leader has developed clear policies for writing, spelling and handwriting. Due to the changes of teachers, these policies are not being implemented consistently. This is also the case with the marking policy. Teachers are not following the marking policy well enough and some work is not marked at all. Consequently, pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they are doing well or what they need to do to improve their work, which hinders their progress.

The assessments of pupils' learning are now more accurate. This is because senior leaders check teachers' judgements. Some teachers set suitable targets which help pupils understand what they should aim to achieve but this is not the case in all classes. Pupils are therefore unsure of the progress they are making in lessons and over time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved over time. Lessons are mainly calm, purposeful and enjoyable for pupils. Relationships are positive and supportive. In most lessons pupils' behaviour supports their learning well.

Pupils feel safe and are well informed about how to keep safe when using the internet and mobile technologies. They understand about different types of bullying,

but some pupils report that some bullying still exists. In most cases, senior leaders act quickly following incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including the occasional racist remark. However, school records show that in some instances where bullying has occurred, regular checks have not been carried out well enough to ensure that the behaviours displayed are not repeated.

Absence rates have increased this year. This is mainly due to a small number of pupils whose attendance is poor. The newly appointed head of school is working with families and outside agencies to improve pupils' attendance. The impact of this work is at an early stage.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The leadership of the school has been strengthened following the appointment of the head of school. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the challenges that need to be overcome. Work to appoint permanent teachers for the next academic year has been successful. A full complement of experienced teaching staff has been appointed to join the school in September.

Currently, senior leaders are working with temporary teachers to help them plan suitable lessons and check that assessments are accurate. This has put the school in a much stronger position to effectively measure the progress that pupils make during lessons and throughout the year. This is a significant improvement. The local authority has confirmed that the assessments carried out in the early years, Year 2 and Year 6 are accurate.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has a good understanding of the progress made by pupils with additional needs. She is also responsible for checking the progress of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. The meetings held with teachers to discuss the progress of these pupils are productive and effective. Suitable support is identified and provision is swiftly targeted to meet the learning needs of these groups of pupils. Clear records of agreed actions linked to the expected gains in pupils' progress enable the SENCO to evaluate the effectiveness of support.

Although senior leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching, poor teaching has not been eradicated. During lesson observations, senior leaders identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching, but the weaknesses are not followed up with sufficient rigour to check whether improvements have been made. The evidence senior leaders gather is not used well enough to provide tailored support or to determine which aspects of teaching are weak. It is vital that a wide range of evidence to support judgements, including lesson observations, checks on teachers' planning and assessments, the quality of their marking, the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and the data on pupils' progress, is analysed so that the right support and training can be given to teachers to improve their practice. Currently,

there is no clear plan in place which identifies the training needs of all teachers and teaching assistants. A more systematic and comprehensive approach to evaluating the quality of teaching is also required to enable members of the IEB to make appropriate decisions about the pay progression of teachers.

The executive headteacher has devised a school improvement plan linked to the areas for improvement identified at the inspection, but the success or progress of the plan is not checked well enough and is not linked to the expected gains in pupils' progress. It is unclear who is responsible for checking that actions taken are making a difference. As yet, the most important next steps that senior leaders need to take to bring about the rapid improvement needed have not been identified. It is vital that a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the school's work is carried out to put this right and accelerate the pace of improvement.

Safeguarding procedures are now more secure. Staff have been trained at a suitable level to enable them to understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children. Recruitment procedures meet statutory requirements. Checks are carried out regularly by the new head of school and a member of the IEB has completed an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements to enable the IEB to be fully informed about this aspect of the school's work.

There is still a substantial deficit budget, but the IEB has a suitable plan in place to reduce this figure. The local authority has agreed the plan and is supporting the school to further reduce its spending.

The IEB has established a shadow governing body. Some members of the IEB are also members of the shadow governing body. New members are being provided with training and support to develop their skills in preparation for the transfer of responsibility to the new governing body.

External support

The local authority is providing a range of appropriate support for the school. A review of the school's progress took place in April and a number of concerns were identified. The school partnership advisor is working with the executive headteacher to support improvement. The English and mathematics advisors have provided training and support for the English and mathematics subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. There is some evidence that this work is having a positive impact in the school. Due to the cancellation of some meetings by the school, the progress made is slower than expected. It is unclear how the diocese is supporting the school to improve.