

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



8 December 2015

Mr Simon Stockdale
Headteacher
Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School
The Bank
Idle
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD10 0QA

Dear Mr Stockdale

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23 November 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 June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- raise leaders' and teachers' expectations of the quality of work pupils can and should produce
- set ambitious progress targets for all pupils, and in particular, identify those who need to make more than expected progress
- ensure, when checking on the quality of teaching, that more emphasis is given to the impact teaching is having on learning
- increase teachers' subject knowledge in writing so they are able to more precisely plan the steps pupils need to take in their learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, members of the senior leadership team, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the recent inspection. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of the Governing Body. Visits were made with you and the deputy headteacher to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classrooms, where teaching was observed, workbooks were scrutinised and pupils were questioned about their learning. A number of documents were examined, including the most recent draft minutes of the governing body, leaders' monitoring notes, the school's marking policy and local authority notes of visits to the school. The school improvement plan was considered.

Context

Since the last inspection three teachers have left the school, including the deputy headteacher. These have been replaced by two new teachers and the new deputy headteacher.

Main findings

You have identified clearly in your plan the actions that need to be taken to bring about improvement. You have also set targets for pupils' attainment at various points during the school year. However, you have not linked these targets to the progress expected of pupils from their starting points to ensure targets are aspirational enough. The criteria you have set to measure the progress the school is making focus too much on compliance of teachers with policies, and not enough on the learning and progress of pupils. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to check whether the actions are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Subject leaders are increasingly involved in regularly checking that teachers are meeting the expectations set for them. However, not enough emphasis is being placed on the specific impact teaching is having on the pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers are largely complying with non-negotiable requirements but the effectiveness of teaching has not improved.

Teachers are implementing the updated marking policy with more consistency. They are now more often giving feedback on spelling, punctuation and handwriting, and pupils are improving the standard of their presentation and handwriting. However, because teachers' comments lack precision, especially in the marking of writing, marking does not generally lead to improvements in learning.

All teachers share 'steps to success' with pupils in their writing lessons. However, because teachers' knowledge of grammar is underdeveloped, these steps are often imprecise, so pupils are not always clear about exactly what is expected of them

when they write. External training has been secured to improve the way writing is taught.

In many lessons teachers provide worksheets for pupils to complete. These worksheets often limit the quality of work pupils produce. Too much time is spent on practising skills at the expense of opportunities for pupils to routinely apply what they have learned. Teachers are still not demanding enough from the most-able pupils in writing lessons. Pupils still need more opportunities to write at length in most other subjects. More opportunities are now provided for pupils to write in religious education lessons, though teachers' expectations are still not high enough. Work in pupils' topic books shows that teachers often have low expectations of what pupils can and should produce.

Governors are continuing to challenge school leaders. However, the quality of the school improvement plan is limiting their ability to challenge effectively. This is because there is a lack of clarity about the features of learning that governors, leaders and teachers should be looking for. Governors have made visits to school to look at pupils' workbooks, but no records have been made of these visits to enable effective feedback to other governors. Governors do not have sufficient knowledge to challenge with rigour the progress that pupils should be making. Steps have been taken to provide more training for governors.

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

Two schools in the Catholic Schools Partnership are providing support. This support has been well planned to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. A number of staff have had opportunities to observe the good practice of their colleagues in other schools, and this has led to some small improvements in the practice of the weakest teachers. The local authority achievement officer is providing a strong degree of challenge to school leaders, and this is planned to continue for the remainder of the year. The school will remain dependent on this external challenge and support for some time.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi

Her Majesty's Inspector