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Mrs R Savory
Headteacher
The Rosary Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Savory

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Rosary Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the academy on 15 March 2016, 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 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 in order to become a good academy.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the presentation of pupils' work
- ensure that all teachers work in a highly professional manner, for example keeping their classrooms tidy and well organised.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, your assistant headteacher and other teachers to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held discussions with the manager for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities, the pastoral learning mentor and the Chair and four other members of the governing body. I had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority that is providing support for the school. I evaluated the school improvement plan and considered the recent visit notes from the adviser who is supporting the school. We visited all the classes together and looked at some of the pupils' books. I also met with a group of pupils.

Context

Since the inspection, one teacher has left the school. A newly appointed assistant headteacher joined the school at the start of the academic year. One teaching assistant has left, and two have since been appointed. There is a new chair and vice chair of the Governing Body and one new governor.

Main findings

Your new assistant headteacher has wasted no time in getting to grips with those aspects of teaching that were identified as requiring improvement at the time of your inspection. She has worked closely with teachers, especially those in Key Stage 2, to make sure that their lessons challenge and engage pupils. She has also ensured that all staff adhere to the marking policy.

You and your assistant headteacher have developed a thorough approach to checking the overall quality of teaching and learning. This involves frequent classroom observations and scrutiny of lesson planning and pupils' workbooks. Teachers who are identified as requiring extra help to improve their teaching are given training which is tailored to their needs. These teachers are then revisited to check that they have made improvements. You have had some notable success with some individual teachers, and it is clear that the teaching and learning in their classes have improved.

Nevertheless, there are still some classes where teachers do not model best practice and work in a muddled and untidy way. For example, they ignore words which pupils spell incorrectly and accept untidy work as the norm. Some classroom environments reflect these teachers' haphazard approaches to work and do not set pupils a good example.

Since the inspection, pupils are now being encouraged to use their literacy and mathematics skills in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 have not only learned about the great fire of London but have also used the new knowledge that they have gained to write about the different occupations, such as firefighting, that people were involved in at that time. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been learning about the human body and have used their mathematical skills

to analyse heart beats and pulse rates, and to work out average readings. There has been an improved focus on the development of the pupils' ability to use punctuation accurately in their written work. Current tracking information shows that pupils are making at least expected progress, with many making better than expected progress for their age. Those pupils who find aspects of learning difficult are being well supported by additional help.

You and your early years foundation stage team have given much thought to the issues raised during the inspection. I saw children developing their literacy and mathematics skills well in the outdoor area. A group of children were creating a bridge for the Three Billy Goats Gruff, and were retelling the story to each other as they built it. Another group was carefully counting frozen ducks in the water tray. The children's electronic learning journals include numerous examples of times when they apply their literacy and numeracy skills in the outdoor area. However, you are aware that the use of more signage in this area would support the children's reading skills further.

The work of your pastoral support leader is having a strong impact on the improving patterns of attendance and behaviour. Pupils who find it difficult to conform to the expected level of behaviour are well supported through a very structured approach. This involves clear sanctions and rewards, such as the 'lucky dip', which has been a great success with pupils. The pastoral support leader has also successfully developed a much higher level of parental engagement. This is being achieved through workshops for parents and by developing closer contact with home when pupils fail to attend school. A slight improvement in attendance rates has been noted.

Your astute governors have a strong understanding of the urgency for improvement. They appreciate the more detailed reports that you send them and find the new approach to the analysis of the school's performance much clearer to understand. Regular visits into lessons are ensuring that your governors are kept up to date with ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. They have tackled parental dissatisfaction vigorously by organising consultations and meetings between parents and teachers. A recent survey of parents' views about the school indicates greater satisfaction than at the time of the inspection.

External support

The school is drawing on quality support from both the local authority and your school improvement partner. The involvement of a nearby school in your monitoring of teaching and learning is enabling you to check that you carry this out fairly and equitably. Your Reception team is shortly to embark on a self-evaluation programme which will support further developments for this year group. You are also being supported by a training coach from a national programme which specialises in managing change.

You and your staff have welcomed all the guidance that you are receiving and use all the external evaluations to be sure that the school makes steady progress on its journey of improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Clifton, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector