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29 June 2016

Karen Dobson  
Headteacher  
Holy Rood Catholic Primary School  
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South Yorkshire  
S70 6JL

Dear Mrs Dobson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Rood Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 June 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 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 May 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure actions identified in the recent review of governance are implemented in an appropriate timescale which needs to be identified on the review document
- ensure that all senior leaders, including those who are taking up post in September 2016, are able to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, and representatives of the governing body including the chair of governors. I also met with a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. Meetings were held to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Alongside the headteacher, the work in books was studied and observations of teaching and behaviour made. A number of documents were considered, such as that showing the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation activities. Documents evidencing the impact of performance management were also scrutinised.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection there have been changes in the senior leadership team and the governing body. An interim headteacher and deputy headteacher were put in post during the autumn term 2015. The current headteacher took up her substantive post in January 2016. The headteacher and governors reviewed the roles and effectiveness of all senior and middle leadership roles. A new senior and middle leadership team will be in place in September 2016. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will be in post in September 2016. Pupils have been taught by supply staff in several classes due to long- and short-term absence of teaching staff. Two experienced teachers have been appointed to start in September 2016. The chair and vice-chair of governors relinquished their roles in February 2016. A temporary national leader of governance took on the role of chair. A new chair of governors has already been appointed who is also a national leader of governance and will take up the role from June 2016.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher has quickly implemented rigorous monitoring to improve the quality of teaching. She has introduced support plans for those teachers who have not made improvements quickly enough. The headteacher acknowledges that the quality of teaching continues to be variable across the school but new strategies such as a new marking and feedback policy are beginning to have a positive impact. The headteacher has worked extremely well with a headteacher of an outstanding school to implement this monitoring system. The headteacher and governors acknowledge that although they are now in a stronger position to improve the quality of teaching, this improvement has not so far been at a fast enough rate.

The headteacher has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in all lessons. Pupils are now working more closely to age-related expectations as a result of more appropriate challenge. Evidence of better progress and higher expectations of attainment is evident in pupils' very recent work. Leaders and managers

recognise that the positive outcomes for Year 6 pupils in 2015 did not reflect the outcomes for all year groups in school.

The headteacher has planned a new creative curriculum which will be fully implemented in September 2016. Consequently, pupils are now more engaged and interested in their work. Pupils commented on how the topics they now study excite them and make them want to learn. In the early years younger children were excited by the dragon's egg they found in the classroom and Year 2 pupils enjoyed their 'Land Ahoy' topic work. Both topics led to good learning in a range of subjects.

The effectiveness of leadership roles has been evaluated; this has culminated in a new senior and middle leadership team being appointed for September 2016. Senior leaders have not, in the past, monitored or evaluated the effectiveness of these roles. Previous instability and poor-quality leadership has led to insufficient monitoring of and improvement in the quality of teaching. Roles and lines of responsibility are now clear.

Although a review of governance was not a requirement of the last inspection, one was commissioned by the governing body. Governors recognised that they were not always clear about the improvements taking place and therefore were not able to challenge the school effectively. Information supplied to them about pupils' progress was not always made available in a format that governors could fully understand. Governors now have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The review of governance has strengthened the team and has identified actions for improvement. As yet timescales have not been established.

Pupils enjoy school and say they feel safe. They consider that behaviour has improved recently due to higher expectations and more engaging lessons. Positive behaviour is rewarded with a marble going into a pot and pupils comment how they like seeing this very visible reward system.

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 are supporting the school well. External support has been provided to the school through partnership work with the headteacher of an outstanding school. The local authority assist the school with regular monthly visits to monitor progress towards becoming a good school. This has helped the headteacher in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching to secure improvements in pupils' achievements.

The Diocese has also helped the school in identifying national leaders of governance to take on the role of chair of governors and carry out a review of governance. This has helped improve the impact of governors. Half-termly visits from the director of

education of the Diocese evaluate the impact of strategies the new headteacher has introduced. This has ensured that strategies are effective in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Hallam, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnsley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**