

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 February 2017

Mrs Ann Kowalska
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood
London Street
Fleetwood
Lancashire
FY7 6EU

Dear Mrs Kowalska

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood

Following my visit to your school on 9 February 2017, 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 January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in January 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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 school.

The school should take further action to improve further the leadership of subjects other than English, mathematics and physical education.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, pupils, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. I visited every classroom with you to see the pupils and teachers at work and to examine the work in pupils' books.

Context

Since the last inspection, one member of staff has left the school and there has been some staff absence. A new teacher has been seconded from a local school that was judged outstanding at its last inspection. A new chair of governors has been appointed.

Main findings

Your strong leadership and commitment to excellence are shared by your deputy headteacher and have been effective in driving improvement since the last inspection. Governors and staff in the school share your high expectations and commitment to providing a good quality of education for pupils. They have raised their level of challenge and hold you closely to account for the impact of actions for improvement.

You have a detailed and deep understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which you have used well to plan appropriate actions to address the areas for development identified at the last inspection. You and your staff have constructed a high-quality development plan which is well constructed and identifies the correct priorities for improvement. The implementation of your plans has been effective in bringing about rapid improvements to the school, particularly in the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. As a result, in 2016, key stage 2 national assessments of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics put the school's figures in the top 10% of all schools in the country. Disadvantaged pupils do well and make strong progress. In the 2016 national assessments, they made so much progress that they surpassed the levels of attainment achieved by other pupils nationally and by their peers in school. Better quality teaching of phonics ensures that pupils are making stronger progress in the development of their phonic skills.

You have improved the quality of teaching by providing well-considered and sharply focused training for staff, particularly in phonics, mathematics and writing. Leaders set an example and demonstrate high expectations and good-quality skills in teaching that inspire pupils to engage in their learning and help teachers to improve their practice.

You have shared your ambitions with all staff clearly and developed 'class action plans' that identify what is expected. As a result, teachers make better use of assessment to amend their planning and provide appropriate guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and respond quickly to address any misconceptions. Learning is now planned more carefully and creatively to promote progress, particularly for boys. These developments include better use of local amenities such as The Mount monument to provide interesting and positive learning experiences for pupils outside the classroom. As a result of better teaching, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and say that they love coming to school to learn.

You have closely linked performance management targets to the key priorities for the school and you rightly use these to hold teachers to account for the impact of their actions on pupils' learning. You challenge rigorously any hint of underperformance. The secondment of an experienced teacher from a local school has strengthened the quality of teaching in lower key stage 2 and complements the high-quality teaching found in other year groups.

At the last inspection, pupils' attendance was identified as an area for improvement. You have taken appropriate action to strengthen the school's response to any absence. Robust systems ensure that staff rapidly establish the reasons for any absence. Personal visits by your learning mentor encourage and support parents in getting their children to school regularly. A range of rewards celebrates pupils' punctuality and attendance and is having a positive impact on the rates of pupils' attendance, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils.

You have rightly concentrated on improving the outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure that they are ready for secondary education. However, you have not lost sight of the importance of providing a wider curriculum that is broad, balanced and enjoyable. Consequently, pupils receive an education that entices and encourages them to learn. Subject leadership has improved rapidly in the school, particularly in English and mathematics. Leaders of other subjects, some of whom are new to leadership roles, are beginning to develop their skills because of the additional training and support you have provided by the secondment of an experienced teacher from another school. However, you recognise that further work is needed to develop their skills fully and ensure that their actions have the desired impact on pupils' outcomes.

External support

The school has received and made good use of appropriate and proportionate support from the local authority which currently provides 'light-touch' consultancy as the school needs less and less support.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

Her Majesty's Inspector