

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Jane Fraser
Headteacher
Queensway Catholic Primary School
Queensway
Chelston
Torquay
Devon
TQ2 6DB

Dear Mrs Fraser

Special measures monitoring inspection of Queensway Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Andrew Lovett, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Paul Humphreys, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 30 November and 1 December 2017, 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 that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in October 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I recommend that the school may appoint one newly qualified teacher in consultation with me, before the next monitoring visit.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the director of education for the diocese of Plymouth, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Torbay. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in October 2016.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governors, by:
 - establishing a culture of high expectations throughout the school that is focused consistently on improving outcomes for all pupils
 - ensuring that senior and middle leaders are held to account for pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that timely advice, appropriate expertise and robust challenge is provided by the multi-academy trust to support the headteacher and governors to raise standards swiftly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, including in the early years
 - improving the subject knowledge of teaching assistants in key stage 1 so that they use the correct letter sounds
 - providing training which enables teachers to assess pupils' work accurately
 - making sure that teachers provide appropriate feedback that enables pupils to clearly understand what they need to do to improve
 - improving the teaching of mathematics and the quality of the mathematics curriculum.
- Improve pupils' outcomes, by:
 - providing the most able pupils with activities that engage and challenge them to deepen and extend their learning
 - supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, to achieve well and make the progress of which they are capable
 - ensuring that those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need to engage them in their learning and help them to make good progress
 - making sure that pupils consistently take pride in their work and present it neatly
 - ensuring that all low-level behaviour is eradicated in Reception, key stage 1 and during lunchtimes in the hall.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 30 November 2017 to 01 December 2017

Evidence

Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and other members of the school's leadership team. Discussions were held with members of the local governing board, staff, pupils, parents, with representatives from the multi-academy trust and with a representative of the local authority.

Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime and conducted visits to classrooms to observe pupils' learning and progress and their attitudes to learning. Pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups was scrutinised. A range of other documentation, including the statement of action, the school's improvement plans and minutes of the local governing board meetings were reviewed. Inspectors checked a wide range of information about health and safety and safeguarding, including the single central record of checks on staff recruitment.

Context

There have been a number of changes to teaching staff. One member of staff has returned from a sabbatical. A new leader of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities took up her post in September 2017. There is one temporary teacher in post.

Considerable changes to the school improvement function within the trust have occurred since the first monitoring visit in June 2017. A new head of school improvement has been in post since September 2017. Roles and responsibilities of the school improvement officer have been strengthened.

The post-Ofsted action group is a small group of governors who evaluate the impact of leaders' actions in relation to the school's improvement plan. They also meet with the trust's school improvement staff to review the school's progress since it has been deemed to require special measures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and managers continue to take determined action to tackle the endemic weaknesses in the school identified at the last section 5 full inspection. As a result, the legacy of pupils' underachievement, in English and mathematics, is being tackled successfully in most, but not all, classes.

The appointment of a head of school improvement within the trust has brought about greater clarity to the school's internal support. Consequently, there is now a clear focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment and on raising pupils'

outcomes. As a result, in recent weeks, the trust is holding school leaders to account increasingly well for their actions to improve the quality of education. This has bolstered the school's capacity for further improvement. All leaders identify that there remains a significant distance to travel to eliminate the school's weaknesses. Since September 2017, the combined work of the school and the trust is already making an obvious difference.

Leaders' actions are beginning to secure better relationships with the community. For example, a recent whole-school event attracted a large number of families and local residents. Most parents spoken to on inspection are positive about the changes being made. Week on week, leaders are steadily regaining the confidence of the school community. However, leaders, including governors, know that this will take time and they acknowledge that securing better outcomes for pupils is fundamental.

The local governing board has welcomed the leaders' improvements to the school's action plan. They use the timely milestones and quantifiable targets, which are now included in the plan, in their regular meetings to hold leaders to account. As a result, governors are increasingly able to provide appropriate challenge and support. The post-Ofsted action group has an acute understanding of the incremental steps of whole-school improvement that have already been achieved. They are clear about the many weaknesses that remain. However, at times, the local governing board is still too accepting of the information that leaders provide and so their evaluations of the school's impact are too variable in quality. Governors know that they need to work with the trust with increasing rigour, to secure and maintain further improvement.

Leaders have used the trust's safeguarding audit well to identify where improvements needed to be made. This has strengthened safeguarding procedures and record-keeping since the last monitoring visit. However, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that actions around site safety and security are tackled in a timely way.

Middle leaders continue to develop their roles so that they are more sharply focused on improving pupils' outcomes. The English and mathematics leaders have strengthened their skills and knowledge further this term. They have applied their previous training to undertake a comprehensive range of monitoring and support across key stage 1 and 2. However, leaders' checks on learning in early years need further refinement. Nevertheless, leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. As a result of their actions teaching in reading and writing continues to improve steadily. Progress is more rapid in mathematics. Leaders need to embed further their checks on the impact of teaching to improve pupils' outcomes, through analysing pupils' progress in workbooks. This would give staff a greater clarity about how to tackle pupils' prior underachievement more swiftly.

The leader of special educational needs has been in post for the last 10 weeks. In

this time, she has updated records for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they accurately reflect their needs. She is beginning to provide support for teachers' planning so that these pupils' learning needs are better met. However, teaching for these pupils remains too variable in some classes. Consequently, the progress that these pupils make will be reviewed at my next visit.

Leaders have not yet ensured that the school's curriculum meets requirements. A planned curriculum is in place that shows sufficient coverage of the national curriculum. However, the delivery of the curriculum is too narrow. Pupils' work in other subjects is not of the same standard as in English and mathematics books. In many classes evidence of learning in some subjects is sparse. Leaders' poor oversight of the curriculum is restricting the progress that pupils make overall.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders are taking effective action to tackle the remaining inadequacies and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. The impact of the leaders' strategy for improving teaching has been sustained since the last visit. Weaknesses in teaching have reduced considerably but are still evident.

Leaders' actions to secure consistent systems for presentation, assessment and teachers' planning are paying off. Pupils start tasks more quickly and generally apply themselves to their learning. Where teaching is most effective tasks hold pupils' attention well and teaching builds on what pupils already know. However, teachers' expectations are not yet universally high and so the quality of pupils' work in their books is too variable in some but not all classes. There is still some fragility in the accuracy of teachers' assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand. Where teachers are new or returning to the school, weaknesses in their understanding of pupils' needs remain. In such cases, leaders have accurately identified this and appropriate action is being taken.

Leaders' checks on teaching, learning and assessment have been strengthened since the last monitoring visit. There is now a more precise focus on improving pupils' outcomes. However, leaders need to communicate their expectations to teachers more clearly. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have greater clarity in knowing which aspects of their work need to be amended quickly. They need to be clear what is going well, and how and by when pupils' outcomes for specific groups of pupils need to improve.

Leaders have made impressive strides to improve the teaching of mathematics. Consequently, the legacy of pupils' underachievement is being tackled across most classes successfully. A growing proportion of pupils demonstrate skills and knowledge matched to their age. Regular training and coaching for teachers has ensured that all aspects of the national curriculum are now taught. As a result, pupils' understanding of problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics is developing well in most but not every class. Where weak teaching persists, pupils'

progress is restricted because teachers do not use their assessments well enough to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and understand.

Since September there has been greater urgency to secure improvements to the teaching of writing and reading. The quality of teaching in English is improving but not sufficiently quickly to address fully the legacy of underachievement. Leaders have started to take appropriate steps to bring greater consistency to the teaching of writing. For example, there is now a consistent approach to pupils' editing to improve their work. However, where teaching remains too variable, systems to edit and improve pupils' writing are not yet working well enough.

The most able pupils do not yet receive work that is sufficiently challenging. Teachers do not consistently focus on stretching pupils' understanding and so restrict pupils' ability to demonstrate their understanding in greater depth. Teaching is not yet enabling these pupils to demonstrate the sophisticated sentence structure and precision expected for their age.

The English subject leader has introduced new systems to track pupils' reading behaviours and enable them to practise their reading skills and deepen their understanding of what they read. This is working well in Year 2. However, in some other year groups, this work is not having a full impact yet. This is because teaching does not require pupils to apply their reading skills with rigour or activities are not matched well to the standards that are expected for the pupils' age. This limits pupils' exposure learning at the higher standards.

Further training for teachers and adults in phonics teaching is beginning to pay dividends. As a result, teaching is more specific and targeted to pupils' needs. However, while recent training is minimising discrepancies in the quality of phonics teaching, adults' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not yet consistently high. In the weakest teaching, pupils have little opportunity to say, use and apply the sounds that they are being taught. As a result, pupils' progress falters.

Science teaching enables pupils to apply their investigative skills in some, but not all, classes. The quality of provision and work in books is highly inconsistent across the school. In the weakest examples seen, workbooks contain low-level tasks that are poorly presented. Other subjects follow a similar pattern. Leaders know that they need to improve teaching in other curriculum subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour has continued to improve. Leaders have started to analyse incidents of poor and challenging behaviour with greater rigour. Current analysis shows that such incidents are reducing quickly. There have been no exclusions this term.

Similarly, leaders continue to analyse pupils' attendance closely. Leaders' actions

have not yet been successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils attend regularly enough. Their attendance has dipped this term and it remains considerably lower than that of other pupils in the school and that seen nationally.

Pupils' low-level disruption in lessons is much reduced. However, where teaching does not meet pupils' needs well enough, pupils lose concentration quickly and many sit and wait quietly for an adult to help. Where learning is not sufficiently challenging, some pupils slip into a slow pace of learning. This quiet compliance is too readily accepted. Conversely, in many classes pupils demonstrate strong attitudes to learning. This reflects a marked improvement since the last monitoring visit.

Outcomes for pupils

At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils' outcomes declined in reading, writing and mathematics. The better teaching that pupils received since February 2017 did not make amends for the previously weak teaching that this cohort of pupils received. Pupils made below-average progress, putting the school in the bottom 5% of schools nationally. These pupils were not prepared well for secondary school.

This year, the legacy of underachievement remains prevalent in upper key stage 2. Current teaching is beginning to address this. Scrutiny of work in books shows that pupils are now making better progress. However, previously middle-attaining pupils' progress remains fragile, particularly in writing. Despite recent changes to the reading curriculum, pupils are not yet routinely expected to apply higher-order reading skills. They are unable to explain their understanding of the texts they read as readily as they should for their age. This aspect needs to be tackled prior to my next monitoring visit.

Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 have risen steeply overall. The proportion of pupils who reach the standards expected for their age is now in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, outcomes at key stage 1 were considerably lower. These pupils, now in Year 4, are catching up steadily in mathematics. Current English teaching is enabling these pupils to improve their writing skills. Pupils are beginning to use more ambitious word choices in their writing. However, more needs to be done to ensure that they write sentences with greater complexity and accuracy so that those previously middle-attaining and high-attaining pupils who have underachieved catch up.

Pupils' progress in Year 1 has been slow to take off this term. Leaders and teachers did not use all the information they had to support transition in the first term of Year 1. As a result, progress stalled for some pupils this term. Recent changes to provision and teaching are now taking hold increasingly well so that these pupils are exposed to learning that meets their needs and it is appropriately challenging. Across the last few weeks work in books is showing some signs of improvement and pupils' stamina for writing is improving steadily.

The proportion of pupils who meet the required standards in the phonics screening check has been in line with the national average for the last two years. Phonics teaching is targeted to address pupils' gaps in learning and so pupils' progress is quickening in some, but not all, classes. Some adults do not use their assessments of pupils' understanding to enable pupils' rapid progress. Leaders' checks on phonics teaching and on how pupils apply their phonics to their writing books are not yet as precise as they could be. As a result, some middle- and low-attaining pupils do not make the progress they should.

In the early years, on-entry assessments of children's skills and knowledge, and teachers' ongoing assessment records, demonstrate that most children are making progress since entering the school. However, adults do not make full use of timetabled learning time across the day. Some children's progress remains too inconsistent because teachers do not maximise their opportunities to assess what children know, can do and understand in lessons. Children's misconceptions or achievements go unnoticed. This restricts the progress that children make.

The most able pupils are being exposed to increasingly more challenging work in mathematics. As a result, previously middle- and high-attaining pupils are catching up gradually. However, progress is slower for the most able pupils in reading and writing. This is because too often the work they are given is not challenging enough and does not require them to use and apply their skills or work at depth. Standardised testing in reading and mathematics is helping leaders to review pupils' progress. Teachers use test outcomes diagnostically to spot gaps in pupils' learning. However, teachers do not consistently use this information to amend their teaching and so the most able pupils' progress is uneven across the school.

Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve well in 2016 or 2017. Targeted support is in place for these pupils to catch up. However, too few of these pupils are making the rapid gains required. Consequently, although differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school are diminishing, the legacy of underachievement for this group remains.

A large proportion of pupils present their work neatly in English and mathematics books across the school. However, when learning is far from challenging in some other subjects, pupils' good presentation is lost. In addition, where weak teaching remains, and learning is not matched to pupils' needs, pupils' presentation and pride in their learning in workbooks deteriorates.

External support

The multi-academy trust has brokered support for the school from a range of organisations. This has included leadership support and support to improve teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics and in the early years. As a result, leaders and teachers are developing their knowledge and skills. Consequently, teaching and pupils' outcomes are improving steadily.

The trust has commissioned an external review of the impact of external support. This is beginning to enable governors and the trust to hold leaders to account with greater rigour and clarity.