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30 January 2019

Mrs Jane Barnes  
Headteacher  
St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School and Nursery  
Poulton Road  
Fleetwood  
Lancashire  
FY7 7JY

Dear Mrs Barnes

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School and Nursery**

Following my visit to your school on 18 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- improve outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils' attainment is at least in line with national averages at the end of key stages 1 and 2
- develop an improvement plan that has clear targets and measurable success criteria
- increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years so that it is at least in line with the national average
- ensure that the processes for checking on the quality of pupils' work provide leaders with a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching,

learning and assessment.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, three members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. During these meetings we discussed the actions taken since the last inspection and their impact. I also visited all classrooms with you to observe teaching and learning. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' books and evaluated the school's action plan. I also scrutinised other key documentation, some of which related to safeguarding. I met with the subject leaders for mathematics and English. I also met with members of staff and several parents and carers to discuss their views of the school.

## **Context**

The previous substantive headteacher left the school in July 2016. Governors subsequently made several unsuccessful attempts to recruit a new headteacher but were unable to find a suitable candidate until your appointment in September 2018. Before you took up post, two different associate headteachers had each led the school for a one-year period. There have been several periods of lengthy staff absence and four teachers have joined the school temporarily during this period to cover maternity leave. The early years lead left the school in July 2018 and a permanent replacement has not yet been appointed.

## **Main findings**

Following the most recent inspection, governors worked with the local authority to ensure that a temporary leadership team was in place to provide stability and build capacity at the school. Some improvements were secured during this period. However, pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage remained below the national average at the end of the last school year. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was significantly below the national average and no pupils reached the higher standard.

You have made a positive impact on the school since you took up your post at the beginning of this term. You have been successful in bringing staff together and sharing your vision and ambition for the school. I spoke with several members of staff during this inspection. All were extremely positive about your influence on staff morale and the clear direction that you have set for improving the quality of education across the school. Parents were also positive about the improvements that they have seen at the school during this term. They told me that communication has improved and that they have noticed a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour. Governors are fully aware of the challenges that the school faces.

They have provided effective support and challenge to school leaders during what has been an extremely challenging period for the school.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve three key aspects of the school's work, the first one being the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have made it clear to staff that pupils need to develop knowledge and skills not just in English and mathematics but across all areas of the curriculum. The work I saw in pupils' books shows that they are beginning to benefit from a broader curriculum. I saw some good pieces of writing in history and geography books. The work in pupils' mathematics books showed that current pupils are working hard in this subject and are beginning to make better progress. However, despite these early signs of improvement, the overall progress that pupils make is not good enough and standards remain too low.

The second area that the school was asked to improve was the quality of leadership and management. Despite the many changes in leadership over the past two years, several improvements have been secured. For example, the school's assessment systems have been improved and leaders regularly review pupils' progress in termly meetings with teachers. Leaders have also secured improvements in attendance. Subject leaders for mathematics and English have supported staff well, leading staff meetings and training events. However, the checks that they make on the quality of pupils' work do not focus closely enough on the impact that teaching is having on pupils' learning. As a result, they do not identify strengths that can be built upon or the weaknesses that need to be challenged.

Following your appointment, you worked with local authority advisers to develop an action plan which helped you to focus on the most urgent issues facing the school. However, your current plans do not clearly identify how you intend to address those aspects of the school's work that require improvement and how you will help other leaders, including governors, to monitor progress.

The third area that school leaders were asked to improve at the previous inspection was the progress that children make in the early years. Leaders' work in this area has not been effective, as the proportion of children achieving a good level of development remained below the national average in 2018. The school is currently in the process of recruiting a new early years leader, following the departure of the previous post holder in July.

### **External support**

The school has drawn on a range of support, mainly provided through the local authority. Teachers have benefited from training and the opportunity to work and share expertise with staff from local schools. Local authority officers are closely monitoring the school's progress and the impact of the external support that is being provided.

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

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**