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Mr P Bates
Ormskirk St Anne's Catholic Primary School
Aughton Street
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Ormskirk
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Dear Mr Bates

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ormskirk St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 1 May 2019, 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 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the most recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- embed the recent initiatives to develop English and mathematics across the wider curriculum, to further improve pupils' progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the governing body, middle leaders and two representatives of the local authority. These meetings discussed the actions taken since the last inspection. I carried out joint learning walks with you, observed teaching and learning and

looked at the work in some pupils' books. I evaluated school action plans and looked at a range of documents, including the outcomes of monitoring activities. I also scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with groups of pupils during the inspection and spoke to parents before school.

Context

You joined the school as substantive headteacher in November 2017 and lost no time in creating an effective senior leadership team. Staffing has remained largely stable, as has the governing body. Your commitment to improving the environment of the school has been effective. Classrooms are designed well to meet to the needs for pupils and learning environments are inviting and well kept.

Main findings

The school's Catholic ethos is strong. You are working hard and in a strategic manner to ensure that effective systems are being put into place. Your actions are establishing a secure foundation from which improvements can grow. There is a clear vision for further changes which is shared by senior leaders, middle leaders and all staff. As a result of the determination and positive attitude displayed by yourself and your senior leadership team, you have effectively set about making the changes needed to get the school back on track. You review and amend plans based on the impact of actions on pupils' outcomes and personal development. Your development plan is well structured, with suitable timescales and indications of what success will look like. You have set out clearly who is responsible for each action, and you carry out frequent progress checks to ensure that deadlines are met.

The implementation of your plans has been effective in bringing about swift improvements. Assessments of pupils' progress are used well to ensure that teaching is more closely matched to the abilities of pupils. Guidance from you and your senior leaders ensures a focus on identifying and overcoming any barriers to learning and improving pupils' progress. Meetings with teachers about pupils' progress have raised teachers' expectations of pupils. As a result, work in lessons and books demonstrates that the progress of current learners is strong across English and mathematics.

Children get off to a good start in their Reception Year. The indoor learning zones have been redesigned and offer a rich range of stimulating learning activities. Tracking systems are used well to inform effective teaching approaches and to map the progress that children make from their starting points. Consequently, outcomes by the end of the Reception Year are strong and have been above the national average in 2017 and 2018.

You have embedded clear systems and procedures for checking the quality of

teaching and learning. Effective tracking introduced in the Reception Year is built upon successfully throughout key stage 1 and 2. As a result, teachers are able to plan bespoke support for individuals and groups of pupils who occasionally fall behind with their work.

Middle leaders are playing an increasingly significant and effective role in the work of the school. The professional way with which these leaders discuss their subject areas reflects a highly motivated and well-informed team. Leaders are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility. You ensure that middle leaders have the time, skills and opportunities they need to review the work of staff. They undertake monitoring activities, such as an analysis of pupils' work and pupil interviews. Staff are active in supporting one another by reviewing each other's teaching and sharing the best practice. These actions are bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes across the school.

Leaders' recent actions to raise the profile of reading are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Reading has a much higher priority than in previous years. Phonics resources are well matched to pupils' needs and reading books are closely matched to the sounds pupils are learning. This has contributed to an increase in the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Results were above the national average in 2017 and 2018.

The library has been relocated to a more central area and pupils make more effective use of its resources. Leaders ensure that there is a wider variety of books available to pupils. Pupils spoken to say that they enjoy reading. They particularly value the new library and multimedia room. They recognise the importance of reading and are keen to choose new books to read.

Leaders have changed their approach to the teaching of reading and pupils read from high-quality texts which contain rich vocabulary. Pupils say they enjoy the whole-class quality texts and demonstrate a love of reading. Leaders have introduced more opportunities for ensuring that pupils understand what they have read and can predict what is going to happen next. As a result, pupils know how to answer questions and decide which skills they are required to use when searching for information.

You have introduced a new curriculum structure which gives pupils the skills and knowledge to succeed. There has also been an increase in musical and artistic learning opportunities. This structure provides pupils with a broad range of learning to develop their understanding and interests. This is because staff plan learning to ensure that there is a progression of key knowledge throughout each year group and in each subject. You have provided opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Pupils told me that learning is enjoyable and exciting. For example, some pupils recorded music at Abbey Road Studio in London. Additionally, the well-attended choir performs at external events. Subject leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum ensures that there is a clear basis for improving pupils' skills and

knowledge year by year. Leaders have put in place plans to develop English and mathematics skills across the wider curriculum but these skills are not fully embedded.

The governing body is offering a greater degree of support and challenge. It has grown in strength over time, with individual governors now linked with key areas of development in the school. These link governors are making regular visits to meet with senior and middle leaders to check on the progress of agreed actions.

External support

The local authority officers know the school well and have acted quickly to provide training and support, especially around the development of middle leadership. The local authority provides support at a 'light touch' level, quality assuring leaders' plans and actions. You are building strong links with local primary and secondary schools, as well as the local university, through science and technology curriculum work. You value the advice and guidance received and welcome the high level of challenge from external partners and governors. This is because this helps you to develop your plans effectively. As a result, the purpose of your planned actions is clear and your evaluations of their effectiveness are precise, especially in relation to pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector