

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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23 June 2021

Lauren O'Connor  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Catholic Primary School  
Ann's Hill Road  
Gosport  
Hampshire  
PO12 3NB

Dear Mrs O'Connor

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

Following my visit to your school on 8 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received four successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- agree strategies that teachers will use to revisit prior learning and teach new content in the foundation subjects

- ensure that staff understand and follow the approach to teaching in the foundation subjects.

## **Context**

Since the previous section 5 inspection, three teachers have left and three teachers have joined the school.

## **Main findings**

You are determined to offer a good quality of education to pupils at the school. The improvements you have made have improved pupils' early reading, mathematics and behaviour. You have prioritised the most important changes and have made these with grit and determination. This approach means that staff are neither spread too thin nor exhausted by constant change.

Subject leaders in English and mathematics have received valuable training. This has helped to improve their subject knowledge. They have used this to good effect, organising and sequencing the curriculum carefully and training staff how to teach it.

In mathematics, common approaches to teaching and detailed planning mean that staff teach the right content using methods that pupils know and understand. This helps pupils to organise new knowledge and thoughts using methods they know well.

Your focus on phonics has revitalised the reading curriculum. All staff have been trained in how to teach phonics and in what order. Staff now have the right resources to do their job. This enables pupils to learn and remember their knowledge of phonics. Pupils read daily from books which contain the sounds they know. This builds their confidence and love of reading.

Other subject leaders have received useful training from experts in the local authority and from national societies. They have used their improved knowledge to think about and plan the content that they want pupils to learn. However, plans in subjects other than English and mathematics do not outline how best to teach new content. This means that teachers sometimes make activities too complicated, which confuses pupils

The behaviour of pupils in the school is calm, focused and polite. Staff use simple and effective approaches to reward good behaviour and challenge disruption. Staff provide focused and tailored support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. This allows these pupils to join in with activities in lessons. These approaches encourage pupils to be focused in class and kind in the playground.

Governors have reviewed and improved the way they check on the school's progress. They have agreed the key information you will give them to assure them that improvements are effective. The school action plans explain exactly what improvements will look like. Governors use this well to check that you are taking the right actions and to support you to make further gains.

### **Additional support**

Leaders have made extensive use of the support available to them. They have worked closely with the local authority to gain an unbiased view of the quality of education the school provides. They have used local phonics and mathematics hubs to train staff in these subjects. The effect of this work is evident as staff now use well-established methods to teach tricky concepts in a simple way. Leaders are, rightly, careful about the support they select as they do not want to dilute or undermine the improvements they have made already.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, a representative from the local authority and two governors, including the chair. I visited 13 lessons and spoke to pupils about their work. I considered the views of 51 parents and 22 staff members shared through the Ofsted surveys.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**