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Margaret Kolanowska
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Kolanowska

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Gregory'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 two 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 you 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:

- plan when and how teachers can check if pupils know more, remember more, and can do more in all subjects
- sequence clearly the knowledge that pupils need to learn in all subjects.

Context

Since the last inspection in September 2018, an experienced chair has been appointed to the governing body along with new governors. The deputy headteacher responsible for curriculum development was appointed in September 2019. In May 2021, two assistant headteachers were appointed to support further curriculum improvements.

Main findings

You and the leadership team have been effective in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the September 2018 inspection. Phonics is now taught consistently throughout the school. Children in the Reception Year progress through the phonics programme in a timely manner. Phonics sessions are supported by fully decodable books matched to pupils' reading ability. This enables pupils to rehearse, practise and apply their phonics knowledge well. Leaders are working effectively to develop the joy of reading. They have invested in new books and improved the library. Pupils explore different genres and respond to texts through character descriptions.

Leaders have prioritised improvements in writing to ensure all pupils catch up quickly on any missed learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils are expected to learn and practise key writing skills before completing more complex writing tasks. Leaders have made changes to the mathematics curriculum. The sequencing of activities in mathematics has been improved to ensure that it builds on pupils' knowledge more effectively.

You and your team have made improvements to the computing and geography curriculums. Refinement to subjects such as design and technology is less well advanced. Subject training has been well received by staff and is making a difference. Subject leaders are gaining confidence in checking the quality of pupils' learning, rightly linking this to pupils' acquisition of knowledge. Nevertheless, there is more to do to ensure that the key knowledge to be learned in individual subjects is clear and well sequenced.

Restrictions linked to COVID-19 interrupted training for subject leaders. Therefore, curriculum planning is behind schedule in some subjects. Further training is planned to ensure all subject leaders are confident in evaluating their subjects. Leaders are also prioritising training to ensure the improvements in English and mathematics are embedded.

Leaders have increased the emphasis on pupils' mental health and well-being. They have also supported pupils to develop more stamina in completing writing tasks. Leaders have increased support for pupils who need help with reading. They have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Curriculum plans include detailed support for pupils with SEND. Leaders

have strengthened contact with parents and carers of these pupils to better meet pupils' needs.

Weaknesses in leadership and governance identified during the previous inspection have been resolved. The chair, vice-chair and new members of the governing body have the right combination of knowledge and skills. In turn, they have secured the appointment of new senior leaders. Between them, leaders and governors demonstrate a determination and clarity of purpose which has brought about a shift in culture. Your improvement plans are focused on the right things to improve the school.

Governors and leaders are taking care to communicate regularly and sensitively with parents about any changes made at the school. Parents remain positive about the school's work. Many shared their satisfaction with the school's curriculum and care for their children.

Additional support

The local authority continues to provide an elevated level of support for the school through a school adviser and other support services. Additional support from local schools, the diocese, independent consultants and online training has also been sourced by leaders. This includes using leadership and curriculum subject experts to help improve the curriculum in reading, English and mathematics.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school development plan was reviewed. I also visited lessons and scrutinised samples of pupils' books. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 121 free-text responses, and 30 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector

