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Carolyn Mashiter
Headteacher
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Mashiter

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Church

Following my visit to your school on 25 November 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 a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing 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:

- ensure that all curriculum plans contain the key knowledge that pupils will gain, in each unit of work, at key points in time, and that staff have the knowledge that they need to deliver these curriculum plans effectively

- further develop staff's use of assessment information to inform their planning in subjects other than English and mathematics
- ensure that all subject leaders check how effectively the curriculum helps pupils to know and remember more over time.

Context

There have been several changes to the senior leadership of the school since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2019. The current headteacher and the deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2021.

Curriculum development has been delayed in some subjects due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have not been able to check whether pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum over time.

Main findings

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of education so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve well. Following your appointment in September 2021, you and the staff have continued to build on the effective actions taken by the previous headteacher.

There is a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils who spoke with me said that behaviour is much better now. They said that they can concentrate in lessons, free from disruption. Pupils also said that bullying is rare. They are confident that, should it occur, it would be dealt with swiftly by you and the staff.

Subject leaders have the knowledge that they need to lead their subjects well. In most subjects, leaders have reviewed and refined curriculum plans. These plans ensure that the key knowledge you want pupils to gain in each unit of work are clear. In these subjects, staff have been trained well so that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. However, in a small number of curriculum plans, the knowledge that pupils will gain is not identified as well.

In most subjects, including in English and mathematics, teachers have a secure understanding of how to assess what pupils know and can do. Supported by subject leaders, teachers use assessment information effectively to inform their planning. This enables them to identify pupils who need additional support, including pupils with SEND. Pupils benefit from the help that they receive. This is not the case across the curriculum. In a small number of subjects, the use of assessment information is in its infancy.

Curriculum plans identify links across curriculum subjects. This helps pupils to apply what they know when learning something new. Subject leaders have also planned opportunities which enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding further throughout the academic year. For example, visiting artists are welcomed into school and pupils visit museums.

However, in some subjects, the COVID-19 restrictions have hampered leaders' checks on pupils' achievement. In these subjects, leaders do not have a clear understanding of how well pupils are achieving.

You and the staff actively promote a love of reading from the Nursery class to Year 6. Pupils who spoke with me talked excitedly about the range of different authors and books that they know. Pupils read widely and often across a range of subjects. This helps to broaden pupils' subject knowledge. You have ensured that phonics is taught consistently well by staff. The books that younger pupils read match the sounds that they are learning. Pupils who struggle with their reading, including those pupils who are at the early stages of reading in key stage 2, benefit from the help that they receive. Pupils develop effective strategies to read words with increasing confidence and fluency.

You have developed an effective curriculum which allows pupils to gain a better understanding of life in modern Britain. This curriculum is enabling pupils to learn about diversity, including different faiths and cultures. Pupils understand the British values of democracy and rule of law. Pupils know the importance of treating everyone with tolerance, dignity and respect.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for further development. This is because they meet with you and other senior leaders to discuss and evaluate the improvements in the school. Minutes of the governing body meetings show that you provide detailed information. Governors challenge this information to assure themselves that the school is heading in the right direction. The links that governors have forged with subject leaders are helping them to gain a greater understanding of the curriculum.

Staff appreciate the consideration that you and governors give to their well-being. They feel valued and well supported. Staff particularly value the opportunity to work together to bring about school improvement.

Additional support

You and other leaders value the support that you have received from the local authority and the diocese. You have particularly appreciated the opportunity to work with leaders and staff from other schools. This has enabled you to share ideas, learn from the expertise of others and access further training opportunities. You have used this support effectively to improve the ability of leaders to lead their subjects well and to develop the curriculum for most subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders in school to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke to pupils and staff, and heard pupils read. I spoke with members of the governing body. I also spoke with two

representatives from the local authority and I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.

I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school's development plan and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I also reviewed curriculum plans for a range of subjects, including reading. I reviewed documents relating to safeguarding and local authority monitoring visits. I also reviewed the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and looked at the results of surveys that you have carried out to capture the views of parents and carers.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector