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3 May 2022

Ms S Mather
Headteacher
The Holy Family Catholic School
Spring Gardens Lane
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Dear Ms Mather

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The Holy Family Catholic School

Following my visit to your school on 23 March 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in July 2021. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the third 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 towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 23 March 2022

Context

There have been leadership changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher was permanently appointed in September 2021. A new deputy headteacher and interim deputy headteacher were also appointed. There is also a new assistant headteacher who joined the school in January 2022. The local governing body has also appointed three new governors.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

School leaders have been proactive in improving their capacity to respond to concerns identified at the previous inspection. External and internal appointments have been strategic. This has allowed leaders to have a sharp focus on the agreed improvement areas highlighted in the school improvement plan.

Leaders have acted decisively to improve the safeguarding culture in school. The pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they feel safe. They know that staff in the school are there to support them and they know they can speak to anyone if they have concerns or worries. Leaders have prioritised safeguarding training for staff. Regular activities are planned to ensure that staff know the different aspects of safeguarding and what to do if they are concerned. Staff are clear on the processes and the importance of acting quickly.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to ensure staff understand the whistleblowing policy. Staff understand how to report concerns.

The designated senior leader for safeguarding (DSL) and the newly appointed deputy DSL monitor records and submissions made from staff. Records show that concerns have been acted on quickly and the actions taken have been in the best interests of pupils.

Leaders have in place a behaviour system that through training and support is being applied with greater consistency. Pupils and staff understand the policy and feel that behaviour is improving. Leaders are monitoring and recording incidents through a system which allows parents to see in real time both negative and positive entries from staff. The positive rewards pupils receive are linked to virtues that they understand. The relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. During social times, staff are on duty to support pupils should they need it.

Leaders have established clear systems to monitor attendance and punctuality. The attendance and pastoral team support pupils and their families when they are finding things challenging. Staff use a checker email to let the team know if a pupil has not arrived at a lesson. Staff act promptly to locate pupils and ensure they are safe.

Leaders have also taken actions to support well-being. The school has invested in provision which gives pupils access to support and help should they need it. Pupils appreciate this and feel that staff at The Holy Family Catholic School care.

Leaders and staff have continued to develop and strengthen the new curriculum plans which were launched in September 2021. The delivery of the new curriculum has been supported through professional development. This has focused on general areas of education and also subject-specific elements. Staff have embraced the opportunity to work across different faculties. They have enjoyed sharing ideas with different colleagues.

Leaders are reflective and see curriculum refinement as a continual process. A focus on formative assessment and developing individual teachers is something leaders are determined to maintain. Leaders and staff are aligned in their curriculum thinking and vision for the pupils.

The new leader of personal, social and health education has redesigned curriculum plans. The content is broad and diverse. Common threads, such as British values, run through all years. Pupils could explain the values and go into detail about how they help prepare them for life beyond school. Staying safe is also part of the curriculum. This focuses on risks pupils may be exposed to and how to deal with different situations. The curriculum is still at an early stage and does require further time to be fully embedded.

The school has high ambitions for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have access to the same curriculum and wider opportunities the school offers other pupils.

The governing body is well informed about leaders' work. They have a detailed understanding of the priorities for the school. Leaders are regularly challenged about the information shared and the progress made against the areas for improvement.

Additional support

The school has welcomed and benefited from support, challenge and guidance from the local authority, the diocese and a local academy trust. The combination of support has been well managed, with each focusing on different areas but also combining thoughts to help move the school forward.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.