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Neil Harris
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Harris

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby)

Following my visit with Annali Crawford, Ofsted Inspector (OI), to your school on 15 and 16 March 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2020. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

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

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Marcus Newby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 15 and 16 March 2022

Context

Staff's and pupils' absence, including that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to be high. Key members of staff remain absent. Some work to improve the wider curriculum and work to support all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is less well developed as a result.

We focused on your actions to improve the areas identified at the previous section 5 inspection. This visit focused on leaders' work to improve the curriculum. We looked closely at English, early reading, geography and design and technology. We also considered how well your curriculum meets the needs of pupils with SEND.

Meetings with the governing body have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic even though restrictions minimised face-to-face visits to the school. Governors have now resumed their visits to the school, and they are able to see for themselves the actions that leaders have put into place.

There are regular meetings with the diocesan and local authority officers, the local English hub and the commissioned national leader for education. The school is still dependent on additional support to maintain its early improvements.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last monitoring inspection, staff's absence has been high. Despite this, senior leaders continue to be committed to school improvement. They demonstrate a zeal for providing an ambitious curriculum for all pupils.

The early reading curriculum has been further strengthened. This is because of the effective work of subject leaders and the support of the local English hub. There is a well-planned and sequenced programme in place. All teachers of early reading are well trained and understand the needs of all pupils with precision. As a result, all pupils are making progress. From the moment children start school, they are exposed to an environment rich with printed resources, such as books and posters. Children in the early years enjoy daily poetry, rhyme and song. Books that adults read to the children are chosen purposefully to enrich children's language. Pupils' use of vocabulary is becoming more sophisticated due to leaders' focus throughout the curriculum.

Leaders have responded promptly to ensure that all pupils have access to the full range of national curriculum subjects. However, while it is clear that there are tangible improvements in the wider curriculum, leaders know that this work is in its infancy. It is not yet fully developed. Nevertheless, leaders have worked hard to ensure that by adopting suitable resources, there are solid foundations in place in all subjects. Teachers are now well equipped in terms of their knowledge and resources to deliver an increasingly ambitious curriculum. Pupils learn the national curriculum content, but it has

not been adapted to best suit the needs of all pupils in the school. Leaders must now ensure that these foundations are built upon to provide a curriculum that is purposeful for St. Mary's.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are identified at an early stage. Pupils then receive extra adult support and well-matched resources. Historically, leaders have not trained staff well in supporting individual pupils. The day-to-day use of support plans for these pupils was limited. Leaders are now acting to develop staff's expertise. They are working with local partners to ensure that these documents are precise. Leaders know that the schools' curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils with SEND well enough. Work in some lessons is not well adapted, and these pupils are unable to achieve success.

Leaders rightly prioritised their work to develop teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers meet regularly together and benefit from a range of support in developing expertise. Equally, resources brought in by leaders have had a direct impact on helping teachers to develop their expertise and confidence. There is a notable culture of reflection and evaluation. All teachers value the opportunity to be observed by one another and to share best practice whenever possible. The vast majority of staff are positive about leaders' work to support their well-being and workload. Leaders continue to ensure that pupils and staff at St. Mary's enjoy an attractive, well-maintained environment.

Leaders have successfully enhanced their work in developing pupils' personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education. Pupils throughout school benefit from a comprehensive and well-planned programme. Teachers deliver this content with expertise and confidence. Consequently, pupils are able to discuss topics with sensitivity and maturity.

Members of the governing body understand the priorities of the school. They seek external validation from the local authority and diocese to support the information they receive from leaders. Using their professional knowledge, they hold leaders to account effectively to ensure that pupils are receiving an improving quality of education. The governing body is working towards academisation within the St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

Additional support

Leaders appreciate the support provided by the local authority. Advisers and consultants have helped leaders to continue their improvement journey. They have been instrumental in assisting subject leaders to train staff. This, in turn, is enabling leaders to improve aspects of the curriculum. The local authority is committed to supporting leaders by providing a partnership with local schools where there is strong practice. There is a particular focus on enabling teachers to best support pupils with SEND. These actions are now providing encouraging green shoots in making an effective contribution to the improvements required.

Evidence

The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, the chair of the governing body and two governors, representatives of the diocese of Hallam and the local authority and the diocesan commissioned national leader of education.