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Karen Salter  
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Dear Mrs Salter

## **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Saint Edmund's Roman Catholic Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 21 October 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with senior leaders, staff and the chair of the trust the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited phonics lessons, listened to pupils in Years 4 and 5 reading to an adult, met with subject leaders for art and design and science, met with safeguarding leaders and looked at documents related to school improvement. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Saint Edmund's Roman Catholic Primary School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made insufficient progress to improve the school.**

### **Main findings**

At the time of the previous inspection, you and the deputy headteacher were new to post. Since then, there have been significant changes to key staff, as well as a new chair of the trust. The school has managed the complex staffing changes well. However, improvements to the quality of education for pupils have not been rigorous enough.

The school has begun to design a coherent curriculum. This is further along in some subjects than in others. In several subjects, the school has not yet identified the essential knowledge or key concepts that pupils should learn. For example, the history curriculum is sequenced in chronological order, but the school has not identified key concepts, such as settlement, that it wants pupils to understand through each time period studied. As a result, pupils do not learn to make links with what they already know. In art, the ambition for pupils is not high enough. Knowledge is not structured so that pupils build on what they already know. In the main, the art curriculum consists of a range of experiences that have tenuous links with other curriculum subjects.

The school has rightly focused on improving the implementation of the phonics programme. This is having a positive impact on younger pupils' learning. However, a high proportion of pupils do not reach the age-appropriate outcomes in early reading. Staff do not all have the necessary expertise to help pupils catch up quickly. This means that too many pupils continue to need help with decoding and fluency at key stage 2. Similarly, in mathematics, the school is still in the early stages of supporting teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. This means that pupils are not yet benefiting from a well-implemented mathematics curriculum. As a result, many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Significant progress has been made to improve the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are now clear processes for identifying pupils' barriers to learning. These processes support teachers to provide learning that is better matched to the needs of individual pupils. Parents and carers are more involved in the plans to support their child. There is still much work to do, however, to ensure that teaching is having a highly positive impact on these pupils.

Leaders are aware of developments that need to take place, but these are being implemented too slowly. The school's ambition for the curriculum and their expectations of staff are not high enough. However, trustees and the diocese have an accurate view of the school's vulnerability and have been instrumental in securing the support of the multi-academy trust that the school is going to join. Work with the incoming trust has ensured that it has an accurate view of the improvements needed, so that the pace of change can be increased on transfer.

Pupils are safe. Staff know the processes for recording and reporting concerns. However, there are administrative weaknesses in record-keeping for safeguarding. This includes the administration of the recruitment of staff. The school has not ensured that records are kept to a high standard.

The school has made good use of external support to develop its understanding of curriculum design and sequencing. This support has developed the school's ability to evaluate the implementation and impact of curriculum developments. However, the school is still reliant on this support to bring about the necessary improvements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Clifton, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of

children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Angela Folland  
**His Majesty's Inspector**