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Mrs Debbie Sims
Headteacher
Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Primary School
Abbey Lane
Abbey Hulton
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST2 8AU

Dear Mrs Sims

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, three representatives of the governing body and the local authority's school effectiveness officer. The school improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection one teacher has left the school. Currently, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and a part-time teacher are taking maternity leave, and the numeracy leader has been granted time-off school to teach in Canada. Five of the eight teachers in school are on temporary contracts. The school is preparing for academisation.

Main findings

Plans for improvement are in place and include all the areas identified at the last inspection. All plans have time-scaled actions and measurable long-term predicted outcomes. However, they do not have regular short-term pupils' achievement targets. This means that the school's leaders and the governing body cannot be sure that pupils are on course to make the rapid progress necessary.

Effective links with the local partnership school, regular visits from the school effectiveness officer and use of independent consultants mean that all areas for improvement are being addressed. Improvements include:

- revised marking, target-setting, reading and lesson-planning policies
- focused monitoring by school leaders on all areas for improvement
- leadership support for the acting numeracy and Early Years Foundation Stage leaders
- regular governing body curriculum committee meetings.

The school's leaders regularly check on pupils' achievement and have a good overview of pupils' progress. However, they do not effectively evaluate the impact of the additional pupil premium funding on raising the achievement of targeted pupils. The governing body is aware that all governors need to improve their knowledge and understanding of the school's assessment data, so that they can monitor pupils' achievement and offer a high degree of challenge to the school's leaders.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to ensure that:

- all plans for improvement have regular short-term targets for pupils' achievement
- leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of the pupil premium funding on raising the achievement of targeted pupils
- the governing body receives training so that all governors can effectively use the school's assessment data to monitor pupils' achievement and offer a high degree of challenge to the school's leaders.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Regular visits from the school effectiveness officer and links with the local partner school are providing effective support to the school's leaders and other school staff. Despite many staff absences, the guidance received has meant that deficiencies identified at the last inspection are being addressed successfully.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-On-Trent and to the diocese of Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector