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18 March 2013

Mrs Pat Peters
Headteacher
St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School
Baugh Road
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Kent
DA14 5ED

Dear Mrs Peters

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Monday 18 March 2013, 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 which 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair, Vice Chair and four other members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. The lead inspector visited classes with the headteacher.

Context

Since the previous inspection one teacher has left the school and a new deputy headteacher joined in the school in January. Discussions are currently taking place about the school becoming an academy in 2013/14.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Under the leadership of the interim headteacher and the new deputy headteacher, more robust processes for managing teachers' performance have been established. All teachers now have targets for pupils' attainment and progress, targets for planning and teaching and improving marking. Senior leaders are quickly addressing weak practice in teachers' marking by helping learn how to give purposeful comments that guide pupils in knowing what to improve and how. Not all pupils respond to comments from teachers and pupils do not improve their work.

Senior leaders are rightly judging that evidence from formal lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and shorter visits to classes, show that teaching is improving and learning is more appropriately matched to pupils' level of ability. Through partnership support from Barnehurst School and the executive headteacher from the Federation of Barnehurst Schools, teachers are receiving guidance to help them improve their mathematics teaching. Senior leaders recognise there is still some way to go to help all teachers feel more secure in their mathematics subject knowledge and teaching.

Senior leaders have taken firm action to deal with inappropriate and sometimes challenging behaviour in lessons. There is a more consistent approach to managing behaviour and helping pupils understand why they need to be attentive and concentrate in lessons. Classrooms display expectations for behaviour, and leaders are monitoring how well teachers and teaching assistants reinforce higher expectations of all pupils.

Leaders have acted quickly to put in place a school development plan that responds to the recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection. The plan includes clear actions, designated roles and responsibilities to lead improvements, and success criteria with key dates to judge the progress of the school. However, during the inspection, the lead inspector recommended that leaders review the three key improvement documents, the school improvement plan, local authority's statement of action and the governing body's action plan, to ensure that the targets, milestones and success criteria across each plan synchronise more readily, giving leaders a common framework for judging the progress of the school. There is scope to 'tweak' each of these plans so that outcomes for pupils using quantifiable data can be regularly assessed.

Governors are becoming more demanding in their questioning of senior leaders, checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. The headteacher provides regular updates about pupils' progress, the monitoring of teaching and action to tackle issues with behaviour of some pupils. Governors are increasingly familiar with achievement data about how pupils are doing at the school compared with the progress expected nationally of all pupils from Key Stage 1 to 2. The lead inspector discussed with the governors and the local authority that further guidance is needed to help all governors evaluate and report on the impact of pupil premium

funding (additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and children of service families) in reducing gaps in pupils' achievement.

A National Leader of Governance is working with the governing body to audit their skills and knowledge and set up a training package to strengthen governance. During the inspection, the lead inspector recommended to the local authority and governors that this work needs to be quickly developed leading to a tightly focused action plan to strengthen governance.

Through regular joint focus group meetings with members of the local authority, governors are checking the progress of the school against the school's improvement plan. The monitoring procedures by the local authority are robust. The local authority is committed to continuing to broker additional support for developing mathematics and will ensure that partnership support with the executive headteacher is sustained during the period of transition while the school appoints a new headteacher.

Senior leaders, governors, the diocese and local authority advisers are working well as a team and are committed to raising the standard of teaching and quickly improving the achievement of all pupils. They are under no illusion that the work needed in the next 12 months is significant. Greater capacity is needed at subject leader level and there is an urgent need to appoint a substantive headteacher for September 2013.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Diocese and the Director of Children's Services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector