

# PROTECT-INSPECTION

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566932  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:** hcarnall@cfbt.com



26 April 2013

Mrs Helen McLaughlin  
Headteacher  
Our Lady and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
Fitzwilliam Street  
Wath-upon-Dearne  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S63 7HG

Dear Mrs McLaughlin

## **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Our Lady and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Rotherham**

Following my visit to your school on 25 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. School improvement plans, governor records and reviews of pupil progress were evaluated.

### **Context**

The acting headteacher who had been in post for two terms left at Easter. The new headteacher, who had just been appointed at the time of the recent inspection, has visited the school regularly during the last term and took up post after the Easter holiday.

### **Main findings**

The experienced new headteacher has quickly developed a productive working relationship with staff and governors. Since taking up the post at Easter, she has begun to deepen her understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Her 'developing excellence' plan is clearly focused on the issues in the inspection report. She has set a clear direction and ambition which is shared by governors and senior staff. They accept the judgement in the inspection report and are keen to make rapid improvement. The headteacher's early actions

are necessarily focused on evaluating the quality of provision and pupils' progress. The precise actions to bring about particular improvements have not been fully defined. The plan is fluid at present but clear strategies are in place to refine and develop the plan and evaluate impact. The headteacher has identified the need for staff to think more critically about pupil progress and to take more responsibility for bringing about improvements. For example, pupil progress reviews do not consistently evaluate why some pupils are not making good progress and teachers do not systematically identify and review the actions to improve learning. Action to tackle key issues has begun to be implemented. Following an audit of pupils' work, new books have been issued with an expectation of higher standards of presentation of pupils' writing. The leadership of special needs has been re-allocated.

The governing body has made a number of improvements. Committees have been restructured with more focus on teaching and achievement. The membership of the staffing committee has changed to enable it to take a more objective view of staff performance. A more formal system for governor visits has been introduced. Agendas for meetings are more structured and focused. Minutes now record more information, the questions asked and by whom. A new log aims to ensure that actions are followed up. Governors have begun to improve their understanding of progress and attainment data. The Chair of Governors has enrolled on a governor development programme. The membership of the governor working party set up to monitor the school's progress is too broad and external representation has not been formalised. The governors have rightly delayed the external review of governance in order to act on their own internal review and to establish a working relationship with the new headteacher. Ideas for an external review have been discussed. It is now time to establish the nature of the external review and to include it in the school improvement plan.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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:

- define the precise actions and timescales to bring about specific improvements
- review the membership of the governor working party to monitor the school's progress and carry out the external review of governance
- improve teachers' critical evaluation of pupils' learning and progress.

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

### **External support**

The partnership with a primary school, set up by local authority, has begun to provide useful guidance on the teaching of reading. Plans are in place for external consultants to help teachers develop their planning, enrich the curriculum and increase the use of investigative approaches in mathematics. The local authority representative has a constructive relationship with the school and regularly monitors its progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**