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Anthea Caddy
Headteacher
St Pius X Catholic Primary School
Tennyson Road
Chelmsford
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Dear Ms Caddy

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 May 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, the school improvement partner and an officer from the local authority. The school's action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the most recent information on pupil achievement and feedback to teachers following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work. A number of lessons were visited.

Context

Since the inspection the deputy headteacher has resigned. A new deputy headteacher will start in September 2013.

Main findings

Senior leaders have produced an action plan which accurately identifies how the

aspects for improvement identified in the recent inspection will be tackled. However, the plan does not include the cost of some of the planned actions.

The school's procedures for checking pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching are weak. Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly to discuss the progress of pupils. They identify pupils who are underachieving and put in additional help. However, they do not check closely the impact of this help. The school's most recent information shows that attainment in Year 5 has fallen further behind national expectations this year. Feedback to teachers following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work do not provide teachers with the guidance they need to improve. Leaders are not challenging weak practice quickly enough to secure the rapid improvement of teaching.

Governors are beginning to provide a greater level of challenge than in the past. This is because local authority training has improved their ability to understand school data and so ask relevant questions about pupils' achievement. Some governors visit the school. However, these visits do not focus on the improvement points identified in the previous report and so do not help drive improvement in these areas. The information governors receive from senior leaders and subject leaders does not give a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning. This is preventing the governing body from holding leaders to account.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- strengthen the skills of senior leaders, and their ability to monitor the quality of teaching and challenge weak practice more quickly
- monitor and evaluate the impact of additional help for underachieving pupils
- make sure that school improvement planning identifies the cost of all the actions so that governors can check if these actions are providing value for money
- ensure that the governing body receives clear information about the quality of teaching and learning so that governors can effectively hold school leaders to account.

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

External support

Governors have received appropriate support from the school improvement partner which is helping them being to understand data about pupils' achievement. The local authority has brokered support from a local teaching school. Teachers welcome this support but during this monitoring visit there was little evidence that it has had a positive impact.

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector