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Miss Julie Bainbridge
Headteacher
St Boniface RC Primary School
Yew Street
Salford
Greater Manchester
M7 2HL

Dear Miss Bainbridge

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Boniface RC Primary School, Salford

Following my visit to your school on 12 July 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, teachers, pupils, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I also walked around the school and visited classrooms and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

Context

Following the turmoil of numerous leadership changes over the past few years, the time since the last inspection has been stable with no alterations to staffing. During this period much of your time has been spent creating calm and stability within the school. You have also been planning for the significant changes which will take place in September 2013. The planned changes include replacing 3 anticipated long term absences with temporary teachers along with filling two other teacher vacancies.

Main findings

School improvement planning is sharp and focussed. You have a strong focus on enhancing teaching to secure strong achievement for all groups. Planned actions are linked directly to success measures which in turn relate to the progress of pupils. 'Milestones' give a clear picture of what will be happening as the school successfully implements the plan. As a result

the governing body can evaluate how effectively teachers are improving pupils' progress. However, plans are new and have not had a measureable impact.

You have taken action to reorganise teaching responsibilities following giving careful consideration to which classes are taught by the most experienced and effective staff. This has enabled you to concentrate your efforts where they are most needed. For example the strong Year 6 teacher will mentor teachers new to Key Stage 2 while you will be able to focus on the quality of learning in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. This decisive step is a positive move towards improving teaching but has not had a measurable impact on learning.

Teachers and teaching assistants have taken part in training to implement a newly purchased learning resource designed to improve the reading and writing of younger pupils in the school. Other staff have received behaviour management training and are now being more consistent in their use of rewards and sanctions. You have purchased pupil progress monitoring software to support you and teachers in making accurate assessment of pupils' progress and in setting appropriate targets for them. It is too early to judge the impact of these actions on pupils' progress.

That said, both pupils and governors reported that there has been an improvement in behaviour since the inspection. Pupils say that teachers are 'stricter' and are in school more, this has helped them improve their attitude to learning. A more stable staff has led to greater consistency and this has improved behaviour. It is therefore vital that leaders continue to ensure the consistent implementation of school policy. Leaders must take immediate action if high standards of behaviour, especially in the classroom, are not quickly established and then maintained.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. This is because the sharply focussed plan had not been put in place quickly enough. The school should take immediate action to:

- Ensure the school improvement plan is followed meticulously and that regular reports based on the success criteria are provided for the governing body.
- Ensure that whole school policies such as those for behaviour management and marking are implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Ensure governors gain first-hand knowledge of progress being made by the pupils through participation in activities which allow them to see the school in day to day action.
- Undertake an external review of governance to support the governing body in their desire to challenge leaders to improve the school to good.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You have made effective use of local authority support, for example in evaluating the action plan. You anticipate that this link will be used to support you in strengthening and evaluating the quality of teaching next year through onsite visits and planned training for staff. Other links have also been established including with the 'Quays Cluster' which is a group of primary schools, some of which are good and outstanding, to share good practice.

These links are already proving beneficial as they have been the source of behaviour management training, advice around the purchase of a software package and planned training on the curriculum in the Autumn term.

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

Yours sincerely

Drew Crawshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector