

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5307
Email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com



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Ms Denise Edwards
Head of School
St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School
Baugh Road
Sidcup
DA14 5ED

Dear Ms Edwards

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Andrew Wright HMI to your school on 9 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- help all pupils take greater pride in the presentation and tidiness of their work and urgently improve their handwriting.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and six other governors, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Southwark to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings and of the local authority Partnership Board. I evaluated the impact of the school development plan. I analysed achievement information and your records of monitoring the quality of teaching. We visited all of the classrooms where we looked at pupils' English and mathematics books.

Context

Since the last inspection, the Year 6 teacher has left the school. The deputy headteacher and a long-term supply teacher have jointly taught this class. A Key Stage 2 teacher is leaving the school at the end of the summer term. You have appointed three teaching assistants to work alongside pupils with additional needs. The local authority has strengthened the Governing Body with the appointment of an additional governor. You have informed the Governing Body and the local authority that you will be ending your secondment to St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School at the end of the summer term to take up your own substantive headship. The Governing Body are working in partnership with the local authority and the diocese in order to secure the arrangements for the leadership of the school, from September 2014.

Main findings

The quality of teaching and learning is still too variable in some classes. The pace of learning in these classes is too slow and as a result, not all pupils are making the progress that they could. You have reviewed the marking policy but it is not consistently applied. Most pupils now receive helpful feedback about their work. Some pupils' books are untidy and poorly presented. Mathematics books in particular are crammed full of incomplete and unhelpful worksheets. The handwriting of a few teachers is difficult to read, both in pupils' books and when writing on the whiteboard. This hinders pupils' abilities to respond to the teacher's feedback. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. They do not routinely correct pupils when work is not of a good enough standard. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who are disabled or have special educational needs.

Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, because activities are planned which meet the needs of individual children. The senior leadership team is not rigorous enough in challenging and eliminating teaching that is not yet good or ensuring that teachers' expectations are high enough.

You are working hard to ensure that assessments are more frequent and accurate. You now routinely hold teachers to account for the progress made by their pupils, at regular progress meetings. Your predicted outcomes for Year 6 are lower this summer than in the previous year. However, an increased level of accountability has accompanied a greater focus on identifying pupils who are underachieving and school data shows that since the recent inspection, progress is improving in all year groups.

Senior leaders are working effectively together to drive the improvements and know the school well. However, there has not been enough rigour or pace brought to improving the quality of teaching. Although some improvements are evident, they need to happen at a much faster rate and, with the impending change to leadership,

be sustainable beyond this school year. Your monitoring of the quality of teaching is focusing on how well teachers set work that meets the needs of the various groups of pupils in their class. Teachers who have responsibility for areas of the curriculum are taking greater ownership of their roles. However, they would benefit from additional training on how to use data in order to plan for and bring about improvements. You have started to work with a National Leader of Education to review the way in which you use additional funding for vulnerable pupils.

You have written a good plan to drive your priorities. It is short term and focuses on this school year. However, you have been too generous with some time scales for achieving the improvements. The arrangements for checking whether you have achieved what you set out to do are not specific enough.

The Governing Body has begun to review how it can be more effective and is working with a National Leader of Governance. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working in partnership with the local authority and the diocese to secure the future leadership of the school. Governors are making regular visits to the school. There is a useful strategy in place to monitor the implementation of the action plan. The Chair of the Governing Body has begun an audit of governors' skills, as she recognises the need for governors to be able to ask the right questions if they are to hold leaders to account for rapid improvement.

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

The local authority and the Archdiocese of Southwark are working with you in order to secure improvement at the school. Their representatives have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since the inspection, a Partnership Board has been established, with membership drawn from the Governing Body, the local authority, the diocese and the school's leadership team. The minutes of these meetings clearly show that you are holding each other to account for improvements. You are using support from other local Catholic schools to improve the quality of teaching. The governing body and school leaders are receiving good support from both the local authority and the diocese.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of the Archdiocese of Southwark and the Director of Children's Services for Bexley.

Yours sincerely

Adam Higgins
Her Majesty's Inspector