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11 June 2014

Mrs Louise Pink
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Green Lane
Rawmarsh
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S62 6JY

Dear Mrs Pink

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Rotherham

Following my visit to your school on 10 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 March 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- prepare plans which set out how the school will address the areas for improvement over the next year. Ensure the plans include measurable targets and milestones for the achievement of each year group in reading, writing and mathematics
- introduce clear non-negotiables for teachers, that include your expectations for the teaching of handwriting and presentation

- ensure governors have a system in place for checking the impact of the school's improvement plans on the quality of teaching and achievement.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and an assistant headteacher, three middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and scrutinised other documents including recent data on pupil progress and minutes of governing body meetings. We undertook a tour of the school to observe pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning and to sample work in pupils' books.

Context

Since the last inspection a new senior leader has been appointed and will join the leadership team in September. One teacher has accepted a new job in another school and will leave at the end of term. Two governors have resigned from the governing body. The school is currently recruiting to fill three parent governor vacancies.

Main findings

You have accepted the outcome of the previous inspection, as you recognise there is much to do before the school can be judged to be a good school. In response to the inspection, you wrote short-term plans to begin to tackle the areas for improvement, and a number of actions have already taken place. However, you do not have longer-term plans in place that set out how you will tackle weaknesses in the school over the next year. Consequently, it is not clear how you intend to address inconsistencies in teaching and raise levels of achievement.

You are making progress in some areas. For example, the role of middle leaders is developing effectively. All are increasingly involved on checking the quality of teaching and learning for their areas of responsibility. This is helping to identify areas of the school's work that need to improve. Their checks have shown some teachers do not have high enough expectations for the quality of handwriting and presentation, and some work in books is untidy. Consequently, you plan to introduce a set of non-negotiable expectations designed to tackle this issue.

Some actions have been taken to improve the quality of teaching. Some teachers have made visits to other schools to observe outstanding teaching of literacy and numeracy. You have reviewed how you utilise and deploy teaching assistants and their support is now more accurately targeted on pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils making slower progress. The type of small group and one-

to-one tuition delivered by teaching assistants has been stream-lined and is being monitored more closely.

Other key actions to improve teaching have not yet taken place. Whole school strategies to improve outcomes in writing, particularly for the most able, and to raise expectations for the quality of handwriting and presentation still need to be thought through and implemented.

The external review of governance has nearly been completed. The Chair of the Governing Body has successfully raised expectations for what is required of governors and there are plans to introduce a code of conduct and a rigorous induction programme for new governors. Members of the standards committee have received training on school performance data. As yet, the governing body has not established a regular method for checking whether or not the school is on course to become a good school, although there are plans for the standards committee to undertake this role.

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 support from Harlaxton Church of England Primary School that was in place at the time of the last inspection continues as the main source of external support. This support is successfully developing the role of middle leaders and has been influential in the review of teaching assistant deployment.

The local authority consultant headteacher linked to the school has provided useful guidance and signposting to sources of support from other schools.

The school continues to be outward looking and has good links with a range of other providers who are providing support linked to particular aspects of the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector