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Ms Angela Ness
Headteacher
St Vincent's RC Primary School
Monkchester Road
Walker
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE6 2TX

Dear Ms Ness

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Vincent's RC Primary School, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2015, 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 September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous Section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- ensure all pupils know and understand what they have to do to reach their individual end of year targets in reading, writing and mathematics.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, 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. HMI

visited lessons, spoke to pupils and reviewed a range of documentation including pupil progress data and recent checks on teaching.

Context

There are no contextual changes since the last inspection.

Main findings

Assertive action has been taken to tackle the school's weaknesses since the last inspection. The action plan, drawn up following the September 2014 inspection sets out clearly what needs to be done in those areas which require improvement. This rightly includes the identification of those staff who will check on progress and who will evaluate the impact of actions undertaken. It does however require further detail about when and how the monitoring of key actions will be take place.

During my visit, we identified a number of areas of the school's work which have improved since the inspection.

In mathematics, pupils who have completed a number of calculations correctly, now access 'super challenges' straight away. These challenges encourage pupils to apply their new learning to solve mathematical problems and result in them making quicker progress. The subject leader for mathematics has agreed to make sure that more of your pupils' work in mathematics is celebrated through display in the classrooms. You have recognised that some of the older pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge because of poorer teaching over time and are taking steps to address this matter. The use of very small teaching groups in the current Year 6 class is proving to be an effective strategy in this respect.

Time is now appropriately allocated throughout the school for pupils to correct, edit or improve their work following their teachers' marking and feedback. Pupils really appreciate this time to complete their red pen corrections and told me that it helps them to better understand what is being taught.

Through productive collaborative work with two local schools, the indoor learning environment in the reception class has been developed well to enable children to learn more effectively in all areas of the early years curriculum. The outdoor learning environment is also undergoing improvement but provision lags behind that being made indoors. There is a need for mark making equipment to be accessible to children in all areas of the reception environment in order to develop the children's fine motor and writing skills.

Following effective support from the local authority, teachers' planning in the early years now includes specific learning intentions for all areas of learning and, as a result, children are beginning to make better progress. The adults in the reception class have established a very effective partnership with parents. Parents know their

children are settled in school and can talk to staff about their children's needs and progress as the doors are now opened early in the morning before school starts. In addition, parents are also more able to support their children's progress as they are kept up-to-date with their children's learning through regular emails from school.

You have rightly established rigorous systems for monitoring the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics and have set very ambitious targets for pupils to achieve this year.

Your plans are ensuring that the skills of senior and middle leaders are being developed through bespoke training and regular opportunities to monitor and report on the work of the school. Similarly, teaching staff are being developed through well-targeted training opportunities, for example six staff are now trained to deliver a ten week programme to address weaknesses in pupils' language skills.

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 is providing appropriate support through the work of the school achievement partner who is a local leader of education. She has brokered the early years collaborative work with two local schools and, as a result, the school has benefitted from the expertise of a specialist leader of education in early years and phonics. The local authority has also provided subject specialist support in mathematics to increase the expertise of staff in planning the curriculum and delivering targeted interventions.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Newcastle Upon Tyne and the Director of Education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector