

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View
Skelmersdale

WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524 **Direct T** 01695 566932

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 01695 729320

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct email: hcarnall@cfbt.com

5 February 2015

Mr Joe Bourke and Mr Mark Mountcastle
Headteachers
St Kentigern's RC Primary
Bethnall Drive
Fallowfield
Manchester
M14 7ED

Dear Mr Bourke and Mr Mountcastle

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of St Kentigern's RC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in May 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester.

Yours sincerely,

David Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2014

- Improve the impact of teaching so that the achievement of all pupils is consistently good by:
 - making learning relevant and enjoyable for children of all ages and all abilities
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to apply their skills, particularly in mathematics and writing, across a wide range of contexts
 - using assessment data effectively to plan lessons which encourage pupils of all abilities to do their best in all subjects
 - raising expectation through the insistence that pupils present their work at a high standard in every lesson
 - ensuring that pupils improve their work by responding to teachers' marking and comments
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in all subjects
 - sharing and adapting the good teaching practice already seen in some areas of the school
 - reviewing and improving the subject knowledge of all teachers in those areas in which they are not specialists, particularly mathematics and science.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring planned actions to improve the quality of teaching and the rate of progress made by all pupils are closely monitored and evaluated and those actions that are judged as not effective are improved or replaced quickly
 - refining the school's development plan to include clear measures of success which relate to improving outcomes for pupils
 - regularly checking that strategies to improve teaching are being fully implemented in all classes
 - strengthening the leadership and accountability for specific groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs to ensure they make better progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4 February 2015

Evidence

I met with the acting headteachers and the acting deputy headteacher, the new headteacher who will join the school at the start of the summer term, three governors, including the Chair and vice-Chair, representatives of the local authority and the diocese and a group of six members of staff. I had a formal meeting with six Year 6 pupils and talked with others in lessons. I talked with parents bringing their children to school and spoke with another parent by telephone. I observed teaching, learning and pupils' behaviour in two Year 6 lessons, and examined written work in class and in an additional sample of pupils' books. Documents, including the single central record of employment checks on staff, safeguarding and other policies and the school's improvement plan were scrutinised.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the previous headteacher has left the school. Two acting headteachers and an acting deputy headteacher have been appointed. The acting headteachers work at the school for four days a week and one day a week. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed to take up her post at the start of the summer term. Five teachers have resigned including one already on a long term absence. A teacher has been appointed and another has returned from a long-term absence. The roles of teaching assistants have been redefined and teaching in the nursery has been reorganised with two teachers taking on new responsibilities. A part-time, specialist special educational needs coordinator has been appointed. Three governors have resigned and the headteacher of a local secondary school has been appointed to become a governor.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Recent improvement to leadership and management has been rapid. This has set firm foundations for further improvement in teaching and in achievement. However, there has not been sufficient time to redress the previous deficiencies and, in particular, the very slow progress made in the first half of the autumn term. The acting senior leaders, governors, local authority and diocese have ensured that the school has quickly moved from a situation of great uncertainty and low staff morale to one where there is increasing stability and staff are able to work together as a team.

Senior leaders have worked closely with members of staff to restore their confidence. This has allowed staff to understand and accept what is needed for their practice to improve. The teachers and other staff who met with me said they feel appreciated and they now receive advice and support as well as challenge. One member of staff summed up her views on the changes in the school by saying, 'same building – different school'. Senior leaders have identified the training and

development needs of members of staff. These are being met, for example, through diocesan training and reorganised timetables for newly qualified teachers, leadership training offered by the diocese and shared working with staff at other schools.

School leaders and other members of staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are properly safeguarded. The school has a rigorous system to record and follow up any incidents or situations which could affect pupils' safety or well-being. When needed, school leaders work closely with external partners to ensure that pupils are safe. The single central record of employment checks is complete and the safeguarding policy is under review.

The parents who talked with me were generally happy with the education and care offered by the school. They appreciated recent better communication with them through newsletters and because senior leaders are more approachable. They recognised the changes that are taking place, but also expressed a hope that there would be long-term stability in the school. Some parents commented that others had found the new systems to make sure children were punctual inconvenient, but they said they understood why the school had taken steps to put these in place. Punctuality has improved.

The review of governance recommended in the inspection report has been completed and its recommendations are being acted upon. The plans for the review of the use of the pupil premium discussed during the first monitoring visit were not implemented. Arrangements are now being made for this review to be completed.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- All who spoke with me expressed a determination to play their part in addressing the challenges the school continues to face.
- Expectations have been raised, for example, by senior leaders simplifying the school's action plan and ensuring that all members of staff know what it contains and how they can contribute to the school's improvement.
- The appointment of a non-teaching acting deputy headteacher allows both acting headteachers and the acting deputy headteacher to spend more time working with colleagues to improve teaching.
- Newly introduced policies and procedures, including for teaching and learning, presentation and handwriting, and marking and feedback are starting to be implemented.
- Senior leaders have carefully evaluated the effectiveness of all teachers. This has included the longer-term impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning as well as their daily classroom practice. Leaders use this information to challenge and support each teacher to help them improve, whatever their starting point.
- Senior leaders frequently visit classrooms. This is appreciated by staff and pupils alike because they feel that senior leaders are interested in their work.

- The revised roles of teaching assistants and better use of information on pupils' achievement means that extra teaching to help pupils catch up is better matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils know what is expected of them. The pupils who spoke with me said that pupils usually behave well. Those I spoke with were friendly and courteous. I saw pupils concentrating well and working hard. Pupils understand the systems to help them behave properly and are confident that they will be treated fairly.
- Leaders and teachers have started to work with others outside the school to learn and improve practice. Teachers are working closely with colleagues in other schools to check that their assessment of pupils' work is accurate. In addition, the school is engaging more effectively with the wider community. For example, it is starting to re-establish links with the Roman Catholic parish.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- There has been insufficient time for the new policies relating to teaching and learning to be fully embedded in the practice of all teachers.
- Leaders are not confident that the previous assessment of pupils' achievement has been accurate. This means that it is harder to know what pupils have to do to meet the targets set for them.
- Year 6 pupils' achievement fell in 2014. The targets for pupils' progress are lower than the progress found nationally in 2014. Unless pupils' targets are higher, it will be more difficult to reverse the falls in achievement and close the large gaps which remain.

External support

The local authority and diocese have provided strong support to the school throughout the recent period of change and uncertainty. They have worked with governors to ensure that there is suitable senior leadership in the school. The Local Leader of Education who was already proving support to leaders had his role changed to become one of the acting headteachers. The other acting headteacher is a recently retired headteacher from another school. Arrangements have been planned to ensure that there is continuity when the new headteacher takes up her post. The local authority has provided additional funding to support leadership. This will continue so that the current acting senior leaders can work with the new headteacher once she takes up her post. The local authority has also ensured that the arrangements for their additional monitoring of the school's effectiveness will remain in place.

The school has started to work with other local schools. This has included visits to the Local Leader of Education's school so that teachers and teaching assistants can see effective practice. In addition, older pupils are given opportunities to visit the secondary school to which most of them will transfer and teachers are sharing in the work of the local cluster of primary schools.

Senior leaders are working with the consultants employed to support school improvement to ensure that the work offered relating to, for example, English and information and communication technology is properly tailored to the needs of the school.