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21 April 2016

David Hickey
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hickey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Margaret's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23 March 2016, 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 that you gave to me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second 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.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the senior leadership team and subject and other leaders, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited all classrooms briefly, accompanied by the headteacher, looking at pupils' work and holding discussions with the pupils. I looked at the latest information available on pupils' achievement. Also, I visited All Saints Catholic Primary School on the same day, which is federated with St Margaret's and has the same governing body and which shares the same senior leadership team and other leadership roles.

Main findings

The purpose of this second visit was to check on progress in relation to the area for improvement from the last full inspection of the school to improve the leadership of the school. Also, at my previous visit, I noted that actions by you to monitor the work of the school were not happening sufficiently frequently to ensure a fast enough pace of change. I wanted to check on this occasion that you had rectified this matter.

You have made significant progress since my last visit in aligning the leadership of St Margaret's with its federated school, All Saints. In conjunction with the fact that the same governing body is responsible for both schools, the result has been a much more clearly unified and coherent approach to the improvement of both schools, and to the benefit of both schools. Also, the pace of change at both schools has increased accordingly.

Leaders and managers at all levels are much clearer now about their roles and responsibilities than they were at the time of my last visit. Subject and other leaders are evidently taking on their roles with greater enthusiasm and sense of purpose. They are playing a more prominent role in improving the school within their areas of responsibility. This has meant that you have been able to carry out more actions to check on the quality of teaching and learning and more frequently. As a result, improvements are being made more quickly than before.

The broader range of actions to monitor the quality of teaching and learning has led to improvements in the performance management of the staff. You are now able to hold much more frequent discussions with the staff about their work, based on good evidence of a variety of types. Leaders and managers are much better informed in detail about things that are working well and others where that is not so. Accordingly, they are able to offer meaningful guidance to the staff and to arrange appropriate professional development opportunities.

You have made significant changes to the organisation of classes at the school. This has enabled you to take advantage of some of the opportunities offered by being in a federation. It is helping you to make more effective and more efficient use of the staffing that you have available and to cope with some of the difficulties resulting from a smaller number of pupils now at the school.

You have made noticeable improvements to the learning environment at St Margaret's. Classrooms and corridors are much more attractive and conducive to learning. You have ensured much better access to the outdoor area for children in the early years provision.

Some of the impact can be seen in the information about pupils' achievement in 2015. Every pupil in Year 6 made at least the expected levels of progress, and all reached at least the expected level in the core subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in phonics improved significantly. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development in the early years also improved.

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

External support

You have benefited from some flexibly organised and effective support from the local authority. The support has been matched well to the needs of the school and has been adapted as improvements have been made to focus more on other areas identified by you as needing further work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham and the director of children's services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector