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Debbie Mulcock
Acting Headteacher
St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
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Dear Miss Mulcock

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that leaders resume their checks on the delivery of curriculum plans to identify the impact of the refined curriculum on helping pupils to know more and remember more
- ensure that staff use assessment information more effectively to identify those pupils who need help to catch up
- embed the new phonics programme, particularly in key stage 2, for pupils who are at the early stages of reading.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership at all levels. Following a period of absence, the previous headteacher resigned in April 2020. There have been changes to the roles and responsibilities of leaders in school. For example, the deputy head teacher took up the post of acting head teacher. A new curriculum leader and a new special educational needs coordinator have been appointed. A new chair of governors and vice-chair of governors have also been appointed.

The impact of the pandemic has brought disruption to the recruitment process for the appointment of a permanent headteacher.

Main findings

Following the last inspection, the school community went through a period of uncertainty about the leadership of the school. Since then, with the support of the local authority and the diocese, you have taken effective action to begin developing leadership at all levels. You have been successful in galvanising staff to support leaders' work to improve the school.

You and other leaders have developed a detailed improvement plan. The planned actions are appropriate, and the criteria for checking the success of your work are measurable and precise. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, you have been able to complete many of your planned actions. For example, you ensure that staff receive the training that they need to deliver the curriculum well.

You have ensured that the curriculum is underpinned by carefully sequenced curriculum plans that identify the knowledge that you want pupils to have. Curriculum plans are designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational need and/or disabilities. Subject leaders work with staff to help them to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Leaders have begun to check the impact that the curriculum has on helping pupils to remember what they have been taught. However, some checks have been

delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. This has hampered subject leaders' ability to assess how well pupils are knowing more and remembering more.

You are supporting teachers to use assessment information more effectively to identify what pupils have learned. However, teachers are at the early stages of spotting the precise gaps in pupils' learning so that pupils receive the support that they need to catch up.

Reading has a high priority across the school. Pupils talk confidently about the texts that they enjoy. They can explain how vocabulary is used effectively to express emotions and describe characters. The help that you receive from the English hub has strengthened the delivery of the phonics programme, especially in early years and key stage 1. Even so, many pupils developed gaps in their phonics knowledge during the spring term. The help that they receive is helping most pupils to catch up. That said, pupils at the early stages of reading in lower key stage 2 are struggling to regain their phonics knowledge.

Since the last inspection, decisive actions have been taken to strengthen governance. Governors are now well placed to provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders at all levels. They have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement.

Those parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, commented positively about the care and help that you and staff provide for their children. Most staff feel well supported. They value the consideration given to them by leaders at all levels.

Additional support

You have used the support provided by the local authority and the diocese to strengthen leadership, including governance. Support from a national leader for education has enabled you to plan effectively in order to improve the quality of education across the school. Training for subject leaders has further enhanced leadership and the delivery of the curriculum. Your engagement with other schools has been beneficial for subject leaders and staff at all levels to share ideas and expertise.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, subject leaders and members of staff. I also met virtually with representatives of those responsible for governance and representatives from the local authority and the diocese to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons, including phonics sessions, and listened to pupils read. I also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at examples of their work. I

reviewed curriculum planning and minutes of governing body meetings. I also reviewed improvement plans and monitoring reports from local authority representatives.

I took account of the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and considered the three free-text comments from parents. I also considered the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Salford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector