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Miss Clare Gardner
Headteacher
St William's Catholic Primary School
Young Street
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West Yorkshire
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Dear Miss Gardner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St William's Catholic Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 13 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 June 2015. 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure senior leaders' actions to improve teaching and learning:
 - drive improvement with a greater sense of urgency and ensure expectations are high enough and teachers set work that challenges pupils sufficiently
 - are having the desired impact and, where issues and inconsistencies are identified, these are followed up swiftly and robustly.
- develop teachers' and leaders' subject expertise in:
 - identifying and addressing misconceptions in pupils' understanding both in lessons and through marking and feedback
 - planning sequences of lessons that enable pupils to secure their understanding of important skills and concepts and make accelerated progress.

Evidence

During my visit, I held meetings with you and your senior leaders. I held meetings, also, with four members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The documents relating to the school's work and the school's action plans were evaluated together with evidence of pupils' progress and attainment. We looked at pupils' work in a sample of their books and made visits to classrooms.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, a new teacher has taken up post in Year 6 with an additional responsibility for writing across the school.

Main findings

Results from the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments in 2015 showed a decline in overall standards. Only half of the pupils left Year 6 having reached expected levels and too few made the progress necessary to catch up in their mathematics and reading. The proportion of pupils in Key Stage 1 who achieved expected levels was much lower than the national average.

Governors and leaders agree that the judgement of 'requires improvement' at the last inspection was the correct one. Although senior leaders have set about a range of appropriate activity and actions, they are fully aware that they are not where they need to be in terms of having the impact necessary to move the school to good. This is because agreed ways of working and improvements to teaching have not been followed through consistently.

The headteacher's drive and evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses continue to be incisive and determined. She has identified that the school needs to focus on reading and mathematics, as well as writing, and this is borne out in evidence from assessment information and work in pupils' books. There has been some success in supporting weaker teaching to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve; however, across the school, expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons remain too low. Too often, teachers and support assistants do too much thinking for pupils which reduces the challenge they receive and limits their progress.

The school has conducted a review of attendance with external consultants who have made helpful recommendations. The school's work to improve attendance is beginning to bear fruit and current levels of attendance are better than those seen at the same time last year.

Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers' marking remains inconsistent. While teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they do not pick up on and address basic

errors in pupils' understanding. Consequently, these misconceptions persist and hinder pupils' better progress.

Senior leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities in improving English and mathematics. However, their checks on the quality of teaching and learning do not delve deeply enough to enable them to establish why their actions are not resulting in improvements in pupils' work.

Governors are committed to the school and, in meetings, they ask appropriate questions. They accept, however, that in meetings and in their visits to the school there is more they could do to challenge leaders and dig beneath the information they receive to hold leaders to account more robustly.

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 has brokered helpful support from Horton Grange Primary School which has enabled leaders to support and coach teachers. However, other external reviews into the effectiveness of the school have not delved deeply enough into the issues and barriers that have prevented the school from moving forward more swiftly.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector