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Mrs Katy Cox
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
North Street
Keighley
West Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Cox

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 April 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in June 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, a group of staff, the chair of the trust, trustees and members of the Trust Intervention Board (TIB). A telephone conversation was held with the director of the Catholic Schools' Partnership. The trust's statement of action and the school's action plans were evaluated.

I observed learning in parts of lessons alongside you, looked in pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning. I also met with parents and carers at the start of the school day and observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and around the school.

I looked at the school's documents relating to safeguarding, minutes from trust meetings and information relating to pupils' achievement.

Context

Following the inspection, the substantive headteacher was, and remains, absent from the school. The trust acted swiftly to strengthen the leadership of the school by appointing an interim executive headteacher. In taking this action, they also secured the support of a partner school. In addition, the local governing body was replaced with the TIB, which now fulfils all legal governing body responsibilities. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher are due to retire by the end of this school year. Of the 12 teachers in place at the time of the inspection, only six are currently teaching in the school. You are in the process of reorganising the staffing structure of the school for the forthcoming school year. This is in addition to recruiting several new members of staff.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since your appointment, you have been relentless in your drive to rapidly improve the school. Your unwavering positivity permeates the ethos of the school. You have a clear and honest understanding of the work that still needs to be done to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. Staff feel valued and supported and are dedicated to providing the best possible education for the pupils. As a result, despite the school's position, staff morale is high.

You have acted with suitable urgency to strengthen the school's safeguarding procedures. This has ensured that the school is compliant with legal requirements. The result is a growing culture where safeguarding is given the highest priority. All staff have accessed appropriate training and staff are now aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. A named safeguarding trustee is now in place, who carries out regular and thorough checks of policy and practice in the school. There have been two external audits of the school's safeguarding procedures, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. School leaders have tackled the audit recommendations promptly. As a result, the weaknesses in practice identified at the inspection have been remedied effectively. You recognise that further work remains to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is embedded and all staff members remain vigilant in their role in keeping pupils safe. The parents I spoke to during the visit have noticed the critical improvements in safeguarding practices and have faith in the ability of leaders to keep their children safe at school. This was also the case when I talked to pupils, who said that they felt safe and enjoyed school.

Immediately after the inspection, the trust took decisive action to remove the governing body and install a TIB. All members of the TIB have been appointed according to the skills and expertise they bring to their role. They understand the important role they play in supporting and challenging the school's leaders to bring about the rapid improvements needed. They acknowledge the gravity of the school's position and have established a detailed programme of monitoring so that they can check the work of the school and hold leaders to account effectively. You

have worked closely with the TIB to recognise the full extent of the aspects of the school's work which need urgent improvement. You and the trustees are all fully aware of the enormity of the journey ahead. The trustees are reflective of their own performance and have prioritised the most important aspects of their work successfully. For example, a 'link director' has been appointed from the trust, whose role involves challenging the TIB and checking that it fulfils its responsibilities. Given the comprehensive review of governance and the significant level of recruitment into the TIB, leaders felt that an external review of governance was unnecessary.

You have established a team of middle leaders who have been supported by specialist leaders in education and external consultants. Due to this support, middle leaders have a growing understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are enthusiastic and keen to develop their skills in leading their subjects. However, they remain at the early stages of development, and are yet to effect improvements in pupils' outcomes. Their action plans are not tightly focused on improving pupils' outcomes and, as such, their evaluations are superficial. You are fully aware that there is further work to do before middle leaders are effective in their roles. This is not the case in early years, where leadership is stronger. The early years' leader has identified priorities for improvement accurately and taken action to improve both provision and children's outcomes. While this is heartening, due to the number of teaching staff who are either new to the school or on temporary arrangements, the leadership of several subjects is still to be established.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding has been undertaken. Following the review, leaders have now ensured that systems are in place to track additional spending and the resultant impact it has on improving pupils' achievement. Leaders are employing a number of strategies to enable disadvantaged pupils to overcome any potential barriers to their learning. However, it is too early for leaders to evaluate the impact of their approach on improving pupils' progress. Likewise, leaders have outlined how they will spend the primary physical education and sports funding, but are not currently analysing the impact of their efforts in this area.

Since the inspection, there has been considerable staffing turbulence. A high number of temporary staff are currently employed at the school due to the unavoidable staffing changes at all levels. This has made it very difficult for leaders to establish the improvements in teaching, learning and assessment they desire. Leaders have detailed plans in place to create a staffing structure which is fit for purpose and provides stability. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited greatly from working alongside colleagues from the partner school. This has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can and will achieve. Changes in assessment procedures are enabling staff to measure pupils' progress with greater accuracy. However, leaders are fully aware that these improvements are in their infancy and that there remains much variability in teaching. The impact teaching assistants have on pupils' learning is equally inconsistent. As a result, pupils' progress remains variable.

Leaders are aware that pupils' rates of absence and persistent absenteeism remain higher than the national average. Systems for identifying pupils who are regularly absent from the school have been introduced. There is now more frequent communication with their parents, so that parents are increasingly aware of leaders' raised expectations for good attendance. While this is encouraging, these practices are yet to improve the rates of attendance for pupils significantly. Leaders understand the detrimental effect absence has on pupils' learning and development and acknowledge that they need to do more to tackle this aspect of the school's performance.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

However, the plan would benefit from more specific targets with respect to the outcomes for pupils. The plan would also benefit from the identification of other resources which will be required to implement the plan.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley

Her Majesty's Inspector