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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Richard Cunningham
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Stakes Hill Road
Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO7 7BP

Dear Mr Cunningham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Waterlooville

Following my visit to your school on 7 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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

The school should take further action to:

- continue improving the quality of teaching and provision in early years, ensuring there are suitably challenging activities for all children.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the chair of governors, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I conducted a scrutiny of books and observed teaching with senior leaders in all key stages and most classes. During the visit, I discussed the progress of pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I also met with pupils to discuss their learning and safety.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been several staff changes. Four teachers have left the school, and new appointments to fill these positions have been made.

Main findings

Your drive and determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school are clear. You have taken swift and effective action to tackle the areas of priority. Your plans to improve the school are sharply focused and are securing rapid improvements. You work closely with the senior leadership team to continuously review progress against the plan, to ensure that the school continues to improve.

You have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Your views are informed by the regular learning walks and 'book looks' that you and other leaders carry out, as well as by the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff, which you gather regularly. You welcome feedback, because you understand the importance of listening to stakeholders and ensuring that their views are taken into account.

You have successfully addressed weaker teaching in key stages 1 and 2 by using a combination of effective external support, skilled peer coaching and close checks on teachers' assessment of pupils' work through pupil progress meetings. In early years, the school has experienced some disruption due to a high turnover of staff and there is still work to do to raise overall standards and improve provision.

School leaders have established an intensive programme of staff training, including a sharing best practice forum, led by a senior leader. These initiatives have rapidly improved teaching in key stages 1 and 2. Key messages are delivered in training sessions, followed by the modelling of good practice to teachers. School leaders then check whether the training has had an impact on improving classroom practice. In this way, school leaders have ensured that staff apply policy and practice consistently. Inspection evidence gathered during this visit supported the effectiveness of this approach. For example, when I scrutinised pupils' books, it was clear that teachers are applying the assessment and feedback policies consistently and productively.

You have taken decisive action to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Leaders for mathematics have improved teaching strategies and raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. They also introduced a daily arithmetic lesson to help pupils use numbers more fluently. In 2018, at the end of key stage 2, attainment in mathematics is now well above the national average; 88% of pupils have met the required standard while 30% have achieved greater depth. This is a 28% increase from 2017 for those pupils who met the required standard and a 9% increase for those who have

achieved greater depth. From my scrutiny of pupils' books, I could see that pupils across key stages 1 and 2 are now achieving well in mathematics. Pupils receive frequent opportunities to solve problems and deepen their understanding. Pupils, including the most able, said that they enjoy their learning in mathematics lessons. They said that they mostly feel challenged because they are asked to apply their skills to problem solving.

You have made useful changes to the school's assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' progress information is increasingly accurate. This strengthens your understanding of pupils' achievement and helps leaders plan more appropriately to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, when meeting with teachers, leaders now use progress information more effectively to identify those pupils who need to make better progress from their starting points. Senior leaders are able to hold teachers to account more stringently because assessment information is now accurate. These improvements have had a positive impact on outcomes; in 2018 at the end of key stage 2, 72% of pupils achieved the combined measure (meeting at least the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics). This is an 18% increase on the 2017 outcome.

You are ensuring that learning is sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Following the last inspection, leaders quickly reviewed how teachers plan learning. Subsequently, you developed a new approach so that senior leaders could be involved in planning meetings, to make sure that 'learning journeys' are both motivating and challenging. You have also supported staff to improve their knowledge and use of questioning techniques. The impact of this professional development is evident from work seen in English, mathematics and science books, and also in the 2018 key stage 2 outcomes for greater depth, where the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading and mathematics exceeds the national average.

Middle leaders are now more effective in their roles. They have become more skilled at holding teachers to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. They have a clear understanding that achievement will not rise until teaching is consistently good in every lesson.

Governors are committed to seeing the school improve and they recognise the key indicators of school improvement. They have become more confident in using the school's own assessment and tracking information and they draw more accurate conclusions about the school's effectiveness.

Pupils told me that they are excited by their learning; they said that they find lessons interesting. They are particularly motivated by their new reading passport, which senior leaders have put in place to increase the depth and frequency of personal reading. This has specifically helped the most able pupils to improve their overall progress in reading and the impact of this action is seen in the key stage 2 reading outcomes.

External support

You value highly the effective support and challenge the school has received from the local authority to help improve teaching and to develop leadership skills. You have made successful links with other schools, particularly in helping to provide exemplars of high standards during moderation meetings where teachers' assessments of pupils' work have been verified.

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

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier
Ofsted Inspector