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Carmel Dodds
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dodds

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 22 November 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I reviewed the school's self-evaluation document and leaders' school improvement plan. I met with subject leaders responsible for writing, physical education and geography. I also visited lessons and the early years setting, looked at samples of pupils' work, spoke to pupils and scrutinised documents relating to the school's curriculum and the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

You and all of your leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well and receive a good quality education. You have responded robustly to address the recommendations from the last inspection. You have recognised the necessary urgency to improve the quality of education provided for all pupils so that they can achieve as well as they can.

You have worked with external organisations and the trust to bring about necessary changes, including in relation to the curriculum, the provision for pupils with SEND and the role of governors.

The school has prioritised the development of the curriculum. You and other senior leaders have carefully considered how the curriculum, including for the early years, needed to be improved. You have ensured that the curriculum for all subjects is now fully mapped out so that it prioritises the key knowledge and skills that pupils should gain. You have introduced curriculum knowledge notes and knowledge organisers that clearly identify the curriculum's objectives, references to prior knowledge and key vocabulary. These are displayed in books as a visual guide for pupils to be able to see how they are progressing and as a reminder of some of the key vocabulary and concepts they should be acquiring. Pupils told me that they like the changes that have been made. Pupils said that they find these new documents helpful as they can refer to them in lessons.

The school has strengthened the curriculum plans. The key knowledge that pupils should learn, across all year groups, is now made clear to teachers, so that links between each year's learning can be more easily made. This approach helps pupils to see connections. It also helps pupils to remember more. Teachers say the changes to the curriculum have helped them with their planning and workload. The school's curriculum has been transformed.

Improvements in curriculum planning mean that staff are becoming better informed about how they can provide specific academic support for pupils with SEND. There has been training for staff to help improve their understanding of how best to support pupils with SEND in their learning. These pupils get the support they need and enjoy learning alongside their peers in the classroom. Staff say that they feel better informed and have the confidence to adapt their teaching to support these pupils' needs.

Leaders have time to monitor the subjects through lesson visits and reviewing samples of pupils' work. They use the information gathered as part of reviews to identify priorities and introduce strategies. For example, leaders have identified that there is further work needed to support pupils with SEND in geography. They are continuing to support staff with this area of the curriculum.

At the time of the previous inspection, governors were not well informed about the quality of the education at the school and there was insufficient training in place to enable governors to hold leaders to account. Governors have responded well to this challenge

and are clear about their role. They have worked hard to develop a strategic approach when holding leaders to account for the quality of learning in the school. Governors understand the school's priorities and challenge leaders on the impact of their decisions and actions.

Governors and leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff morale is positive. Staff are supportive of the changes that leaders are making. They value the opportunities for their professional learning. One member of staff captured the thoughts of many when they said, 'The recent training for early years was inspiring.'

Leaders' engagement with the Our Lady Immaculate Academies Trust has been successful. Leaders value the support the trust has provided to review the quality of their provision. Areas needing improvement identified in the June 2022 section 5 report have been prioritised in the school's development plan. Staff have received helpful support and training, which has improved the curriculum.

In order to continue your progress in improving the school, the next step is to develop the implementation of the curriculum now so that the intent is well understood and in place, and you have acknowledged that this should now be your main focus.

I am copying this letter to the strategic executive lead of the Our Lady Immaculate Academies Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Northampton, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Ashbolt
His Majesty's Inspector