



Educational excellence together

12 WEEK PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT FOR SCHOOLS JUDGED 'REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT'

St Paul's Catholic Primary (373)

Unique reference number	117492
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Review number	SR171013
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Head teacher	Yvonne Devereux.
Chair of Governors	Anthony McGolgan.
Date of last Ofsted school inspection	28 th February – 1 st March 2013.
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In line with the Local Authority's (LA) response to schools judged as requiring improvement (RI) at their last Section 5 Ofsted inspection, this review was undertaken approximately 10 weeks after the school's HMI monitoring visit. The purpose of the review is twofold:

- To judge the school's progress against the key issues highlighted by Ofsted, ensuring it has responded quickly enough and has clearly begun the processes needed to move the school to 'good' at its next inspection.
- To assess if the support the school is receiving from the LA is appropriate and if not, to readjust that support in the light of the findings from this review.

If the school is making reasonable, or better, progress towards its targets no further review will take place. If, however, any aspect of the improvement targets is judged as making inadequate progress a further review will be arranged 10-12 weeks from the date of this review. It may be at that stage only certain aspects of the improvement targets will be assessed.

Review date Thursday 17th October 2013

Progress review against Key Issues - Previous Ofsted (3) requires Improvement

Information about this Review

Evidence was gathered during the review from a variety of sources. The head teacher and deputy head teacher provided a range of supportive documentation and assessment data as well as participating in some joint work scrutiny. In addition, joint classroom observations, discussions with a number of children and meetings with representatives of the governing body also provided valuable information. Discussion with a number of subject leaders, the SENCO and also classroom support assistants afforded them the opportunity to outline their different roles in the school.

Key Issue 1

Improve the quality of teaching and increase the amount that is good or better in Years 1 to 4 by:

- 1.1 ensuring that teachers always match work to the learning needs of the different groups of pupils in their class and provide enough challenge for more-able pupils.
- 1.2 making full use of teaching assistants in lessons and planning precisely how they are to support disabled pupils and those who have special needs.
- 1.3 developing the way teachers and teaching assistants use questioning to make sure that pupils understand the ideas that underlie the work that they are given to do.
- 1.4 ensuring that pupils make full use of the comments in teachers' marking to move their learning on.

Summary of key findings for Key Issue 1

Judgement – Good progress

The school has been working hard to raise the proportion of good or better teaching and learning seen in lessons to ensure a greater consistency in classroom practice. This work has required recent review to accommodate a significant influx of new staff including three newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

During the review, the school asked if members of the recently formed Senior Leadership Team (SLT) could be part of joint lessons observations as part of their ongoing management training. These joint observations took place in both Key Stage 1 (KS1) and In Key Stage 2 (KS2). It was agreed not to visit the NQTs although previous observation sheets had been completed and were made available during the visit.

The school has undergone robust moderation of its assessment procedures. The lessons were well planned and differentiated activities identified. Support staff were well deployed to specific target groups who benefited from small group additional support. During the lessons learning objectives were quickly established by the class teacher. Pupils had a secure grasp of what was required and set about their tasks with a positive attitude; one child commented that "problems are

explained and you are supported". Support staff quickly settled into a positive dialogue with their group and some good open ended questioning was in evidence. This promoted healthy conversations and strong relationships between staff and pupils became apparent. One child commented "They're like a second teacher and they're good at helping you sort out problems". This had a positive impact on pupils' progress and many pupils met their learning objectives as a result.

Challenge within lessons, for the more able pupils, was variable. In the best lessons, genuine opinion seeking and personal interpretation was encouraged, whilst in other lessons work was over prescriptive and opportunities to encourage investigative and imaginative learning missed. These groups tended to give the teacher what the teacher wanted rather than developing their own opinions and ideas.

In the joint work scrutiny with the head teacher of a range of literacy and maths books, the new marking scheme was evident and the activity focused on how consistently it was being applied across the school. Evidence showed many positive features with staff making a genuine effort to apply the agreed policy. There was some variance with some lengthy and descriptive marking but efforts to lead pupils towards their next steps were in evidence. The school now needs time for the system to become embedded. Discussions with pupils regarding marking proved informative with pupils speaking confidently about reward systems, peer marking, and self evaluation and their role in responding to teachers' marking. They understood that "next steps means, it's to move you on, they're pushing your learning on". However, individual targets and an understanding of national curriculum levels require further explanation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Key Issue 1

- Make sure opportunities for investigative and imaginative learning take place for all pupils including the most able.
- Use appropriate software in I.C.T. for small group work to provide visual stimulus and opportunities for children to work independently
- Embed and apply consistently the new marking system
- Make sure pupils' understanding of national curriculum levels and how well they are doing requires is developed further

Key Issue 2

Increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:

2.1 providing more opportunities for investigation and problem solving in mathematics.

2.2 encouraging pupils to produce written work that is imaginative and includes exciting vocabulary.

2.3 improving pupils' grasp of grammar and punctuation and provide a greater focus on the way they structure their ideas.

2.4 increasing opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects and topics.

Summary of key findings for Key Issue 2

Judgement – Good progress

The quality of display in the school reflects a rich and varied curriculum. Through its themed work the school strives to maintain a broad curriculum and provide opportunities for children to produce imaginative writing. Themes such as Romans, Space and a Keeping Healthy topic provided children with wide ranging genres to work with including non chronological report writing and instructional writing.

Although at an early stage, this thematic approach is having a positive impact on developing pupils' vocabulary and written work. This was evidenced in pupils' learning journals, theme books and in some good quality display work in all of the key stages.

Pupils are gaining confidence in their writing with grammatical structure and punctuation being used appropriately in a range of contexts. In one lesson, an Upper Key Stage 2 teacher skilfully extended her class's language development by inviting them to explore a Shakespearian play. They discussed how its emotive and descriptive language allowed the writer to express emotion. The pupils responded to her questioning enthusiastically with some excellent responses as they developed their own ideas.

The school has wisely used homework to support their work and parents have been invited to school to be shown how to become more involved in their own child's learning.

Work in maths has benefited from the introduction of the "My Maths" programme. Although new this term, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their maths challenge. External support has brought new ideas and the children in Key Stage 1 could explain how they used their "check it out station". One child pointed out their growing independence; "this means you can check out your work yourself without going to the teacher". There was some evidence of practical equipment being used to support learning in maths but opportunities to use ICT, for example, are missed. This practical element to the lesson is of particular importance to those pupils in transition from the foundation stage that requires opportunities for first hand experiences to their learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Key Issue 2

- Promote the home/school links through the planned parental workshops in both Maths and English.
- Continue to extend writing opportunities in a range of genres across the curriculum by developing current practice on themed work.
- Provide a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme that ensures all staff including NQTs identify and follow the school's current best practice and so increase pupils' rates of progress in Maths and English.
- Embed recent changes to maths practice.
- Continue to use external support to enrich the curriculum and also help staff consolidate practice.

Key Issue 3

Strengthen leadership and management in order to improve teaching and increase the school's effectiveness by:

3.1 ensuring leaders and governors hold teachers firmly to account for matching learning to the needs of all pupils in their class.

3.2 developing the leadership skills of teachers who are responsible for subjects so that they make a greater contribution to the drive to raise achievement.

3.3 making sure that the two newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinators are fully trained to fulfil their roles.

Summary of key findings for Key Issue 3

Judgement - Good progress

The leadership and management of the school are developing the role of subject leaders. The school mentors its NQT staff to good effect and they have an understanding of the role of a subject leader. The school has been able to include them in understanding elements of the role through its current curriculum planning. More experienced staff are developing action plans and audits of their subjects. They are also creating a Self Evaluation Form (SEF) to outline how pupils' progress can be tracked.

The school has made good progress in improving the effectiveness of its governing body. Discussion with a representative cross section of the governing body revealed their appreciation of the head teacher's work and approval of the school's improvements. They now are confident that since January 2013 assessments are accurate and that pupils' future progress data will be secure. Through their standards committee they are aware of how the school sets its targets and how pupil progress meetings also indicate the quality of the teaching and learning. They have a firm grasp of financial arrangements and are keen to ensure that they target provision to address weakness. For example the development of the outdoor environment in the Foundation Stage and the purchase of new laptops have been prioritised. Governors are beginning to seek out information that provides them with a cross section of indicators that will help them monitor more closely how well the school is operating.

The school has re-organised its Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role. They have identified one teacher to fill the position as opposed to the two who previously shared the position. The SENCo is currently undergoing the appropriate training to gain a SEN national qualification. Links with a range of external agencies have been developed and networking links improved to ensure that the school's most vulnerable pupils are well supported. The intervention programmes are delivered by the teaching assistants. Links with parents are good and the school identifies its SEND pupils in a timely fashion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Key Issue 3

- Ensure that pupil progress meetings continue so that pupils' attainment and progress are closely analysed.
- Continue to develop the role of the senior leadership team to support the improvement of teaching and learning across the school.
- Ensure that lesson planning is informed by the school's assessment systems and identifies cohort, group and individual needs so that the level of challenge is appropriate for all.
- Continue to develop the role of the subject leaders through a supportive CPD programme.

**Overall judgement against progress since the inspection against the key issues
What does the school need to do to improve further?**

Judgement – good progress.

The school has made good progress in all areas that were identified as key issues from the Ofsted inspection as a result of a rigorous approach to school improvement.

Lead Adviser – Steve Rigby, Hertfordshire Review Consultant