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25 February 2011

Mrs K Sullivan
Headteacher
St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School
Webster Street
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Liverpool
Merseyside
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Dear Mrs Sullivan,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 February 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please thank the pupils, members of the governing body and the English specialist from the local authority who gave up their time to talk to me.

There have been few contextual changes to the school since the previous inspection. It is now settled in its refurbished accommodation with only minor works to complete. However, an increasing proportion of pupils are being admitted to the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

As a result of the inspection on 14 September 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has responded to each of the areas of improvement identified during the previous inspection with energy and focus. Good progress has been achieved with each issue. In tackling the areas for improvement, leadership and management at all levels have been strengthened, including governance, and the school is better placed to ensure improvement continues.

The school did not take part in the national, end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2010. However, externally moderated teacher assessments of Year 6 work indicated a much improved performance in English, including in writing, in 2010. The current Year 6 is on target to achieve broadly similar results this year. Moreover, allowing for differences between individual cohorts, nearly each year group in the school is meeting challenging targets for

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progress in English. Where year groups and pupils are not meeting their targets, the school has implemented strategies and interventions to help pupils catch up. There are no signs that the poor performance of pupils in English in 2009 will be repeated.

Pupils undertake a very wide range of work in English, in writing in particular. Their work books show generally good progression from year to year. Almost without exception, the presentation of pupils' work is very good, handwriting in particular. The school's efforts to improve handwriting and presentation have led to significant progress. Pupils have responded well to the higher expectations of teachers. They continue to enjoy school and respect their teachers, who they believe are fair to them and who they hold in high esteem. The pupils, boys in particular, appreciate the changes introduced to make lessons more relevant and interesting for them. They talk of lessons being fun. They enjoy lessons where they are active, where they talk with partners and cooperate in groups to achieve a task. Pupils of all abilities are keener to write and prouder of their writing.

The teaching of English and of writing has improved. It was good, overall, during the monitoring inspection, whereas teaching was judged satisfactory overall in the inspection of September 2009. Teaching of a less effective nature remains. However, an example of outstanding teaching was seen in a class with pupils from a very wide range of ability. Each pupil made very good progress in their writing even though the lesson had a geography focus. Work was very well matched to learning needs, tightly structured to keep pupils focused on what they needed to learn and the pupils were really interested in the subject of the writing exercise. In general, teachers' planning has increased in thoroughness and lessons are more creative. Planning is more sharply focused on helping pupils achieve the skills they need. Teachers now make much better assessments of pupils' day-to-day assignments. Marking is much improved. It clearly identifies what pupils have achieved and what they need to do to improve, although this is not yet completely consistent. Teachers have a much clearer understanding of the levels pupils are working at. They use this information better to plan further lessons and share it with pupils. Pupils, particularly older ones, have a clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses and what they might aim for if they improve.

The inspection of September 2009 identified a gap in the school's preparation of pupils for life in a multicultural England; this gap is being closed. The school engages with a primary school in Liverpool with a very different ethnic make up to that of St Elizabeth's. A programme of visits is underway and pupils already show greater understanding of tolerance and diversity.

The increased effectiveness of leaders and managers lies behind the improvements reported above. The senior leadership team now draws on the experience and expertise of other members of staff. More teachers than before are involved in driving improvements forward. In English, the cross-phase English Working Party, supported by the local authority, is proving highly effective. The introduction of rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, term by term, has radically improved accountability across the whole school, so that teachers' expectations have been clarified and raised. Pupils are benefitting from teachers' increased



understanding of attainment and progress, as teachers share information with pupils in regular interviews. The new climate of the school, described above, is generating a stronger sense of purpose among staff, who see the improvements they are making. Morale is high. Governance also shows significant improvement. The school's cycle of checks and balances is now aligned with the cycle of the governing body meetings. Reviews of pupils' progress are followed by meetings of the curriculum committee, where data are analysed rigorously and questions raised by the governing body. In turn the curriculum committee presents to the full governing body, where the performance of the school is further challenged. The governing body are more involved in determining priorities for the future. All processes have become more rigorous and open. As a result, the school is in a stronger position to ensure continuing improvement.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 14 September 2009

- Raise standards in English by:
 - providing activities which will increase boys' eagerness to write
 - ensuring all pupils, particularly the more able, are given more opportunities to extend their writing in all subjects
 - improving the presentation of pupils' work, in particular their handwriting, by implementing a consistent approach throughout the school and prioritising the teaching of handwriting.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring:
 - teachers plan lessons which match pupils' capabilities and interests
 - teachers make good use of day-to-day assessments to ensure all pupils achieve their potential.
- Improve the quality of the school's self-evaluation and performance by:
 - clearly identifying in the school improvement plan areas for improvement and timescales to achieve them
 - ensuring the governing body are more involved in setting priorities and in rigorously monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress.
- Develop, implement, monitor and review the school's community cohesion strategy to take greater account of different socio-economic, religious and ethnic groups beyond the local area.