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11 March 2011

Mrs Rita Horner  
The Headteacher  
Christ the King Catholic School, Amesbury  
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Amesbury  
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SP4 7LX

Dear Mrs Horner

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Christ the King Catholic School, Amesbury**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 March 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 governors and pupils for their help.

There have been no major contextual changes since the last inspection, numbers on roll have risen and continue to rise with the school moving from nine to ten classes in September 2011. Improvements to outdoor learning facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now complete, providing protection from the sun and rain, and new resources such as the large climb-on pirate ship are helping to develop a more stimulating environment.

As a result of the inspection on 1 February 2010, 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.



Year 6 pupils' attainment improved in 2010 as a result of better use of assessment by teachers to set targets and develop planning for different ability groups. This helped middle ability pupils especially and the proportion of all pupils reaching Level 4 plus was notably higher. This was particularly so in terms of writing, where the school's renewed focus and the newly introduced 'Big Write' approach is paying dividends. Boys, previously disinterested in writing, are now eagerly involved and the development of opportunities across the curriculum through revised planning on central themes is benefiting all pupils. Learning is obviously fun. A good example being in a Years 3 and 4 literacy lesson where what could have been a mundane punctuation exercise was brought to life in role play, with drama being very effectively used to highlight speech marks and commas. In a Year 6 English lesson on persuasive writing, the school's new commitment to the use of talking partners to get pupils to share ideas and evaluate success culminated in lively well-reasoned debate. Pupils, especially the more able, were very effectively challenged to take the lead in research to support their points of view.

The impact of new initiatives is still developing. Predictions for 2011, based on the school's own well-documented data, point to continuing positive improvement with an overall profile of attainment much closer to the national average. Taking those pupils in the special unit out of calculations indicates that in English and mathematics attainment is broadly average. This is reassuring of good progress against the areas for development of the last report. However, although there are increases in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in both subjects, these are still below the national average. That this is more obvious in mathematics than English is a tribute to the success of the 'Big Write' approach, but highlights that problem solving and investigative mathematics are now priorities. The school is aware of this and is seeking to redress the balance. Good use of experience gained by staff visiting other schools and advice from such sources as the School Improvement Partner are being well used as the basis of development. In a good Year 6 lesson on probability, the teacher's attention to providing opportunities for pupils to explain their strategies and use the correct vocabulary enhanced their understanding. The relevance of the activity was guaranteed by being skilfully related to pupils' everyday life. The result was good learning and rapid progress, particularly for more able pupils, as well as proving enjoyable for all. Visits to other lessons across the school show that the modelling of such good practice is having positive effects. However, the pace of learning is variable with isolated incidents where explanations are too long and pupils are not active enough, for example in physical education.

Throughout the school pupils behave well and show positive attitudes. Good progress has been made in sustaining the school's positive ethos, building on the success of provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, continuing good care, guidance and support, and, strengths in pupils' personal development. These aspects are now more deliberately complemented through careful analysis of data to track the performance of every pupil and inform future planning. As a result, pupils



are making at least the expected progress. Staff make constant reference to learning objectives and pupils' individual targets to show how progress can be measured. Making more obvious written comments and prompts in marking to direct pupils to ways of making improvements is the way forward.

The way developments in the use of assessment are managed and monitored with pupils drawn into the self-evaluation process is a key factor in the school's good progress towards establishing its capacity to sustain further improvement. The school development plan has been used effectively to improve provision and consequently drive up attainment. Since the last inspection greater opportunities have been provided for staff in general to contribute, participate in setting priorities and evaluate success. Together with sustained good leadership, this has enhanced team spirit and job satisfaction as well as benefiting pupils' learning. Governors are better informed through links with particular classes as well as subjects and are in a better position to challenge decisions on the basis of outcomes in pupils' progress. A good example is in the tracking of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities following the increase in teaching assistant hours to establish cause and effect.

The school is well supported by the local authority through regular contact with the School Improvement Partner. This has resulted in more incisive self-evaluation as well as providing a sounding board for the development of new ideas.

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

Mike Burghart  
**Additional Inspector**



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2010**

- Raise standards in writing by:
  - ensuring teachers always use assessment information to set challenging work
  - ensuring pupils write every day.
- Ensure the curriculum is planned to stretch more able pupils.
- Sharpen monitoring and improvement planning to ensure it focuses on the outcomes for pupils' learning.