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29 June 2011

Mrs E Allen  
Headteacher  
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Preston  
Downing Street  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 4RH

Dear Mrs Allen,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Preston**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Year 6 pupils I talked with and to the members of the governing body for giving time for a meeting with me.

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staffing changes in the school. A substantive headteacher took up post in June 2010, in July 2010 the acting deputy headteacher left the school and in September 2010 two new teachers were appointed. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased significantly.

As a result of the inspection on 14 October 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.

Pupils' achievement is improving well at both key stages. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates that they are now well prepared for their writing tasks and are expected to complete a good amount of work each lesson. The quality of presentation shows good improvement since the start of the year and reflects pupils' increasing confidence and pride in their work. The school's tracking data show that the proportion of pupils making at least expected progress has improved well this year and that the majority are on course to meet their end-of-year targets. Predictions for writing, supported by the work in pupils' books, also show a dramatic rise in the performance of Year 6 pupils. The performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests in mathematics this year has far exceeded that of recent years and represents the school's best ever results in the subject. A similar rise in attainment is evident in the work in pupils' books by the end of Year 2.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Changes to leadership and management structures and the development of key skills for middle leaders have had a marked impact on improving provision and attainment, especially in writing and science. The school's decision to divide the leadership of literacy into separate responsibilities, one for reading and the other for writing, has enabled both aspects of literacy to move forward at a good pace. Each aspect leader is responsible for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress and planning support to overcome underachievement. In reading, this is leading to a significant rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level by the end of Year 2. Writing is improving quickly right across the school in response to a number of well-planned initiatives and staff development programmes led by the deputy headteacher. These include the introduction of a common approach to teaching writing and regular, planned opportunities for extended writing in other subjects. This approach has been wholeheartedly embraced by staff. Pupils report that they now enjoy writing because they know what features good writing should contain. The introduction of phonics teaching across the school is accelerating pupils' output during writing sessions because this involves being taught to sound out spellings, so pupils are able to progress without being dependent on an adult for support. Another recent development, which is contributing well to the rise in attainment in writing, is the school's focus on Talk for Writing, which gives pupils plenty of time to think about and discuss ideas for writing, so they are well prepared to work independently. Attainment and progress in science are now tracked as part of the new whole-school tracking system. Teachers are now aware of how well pupils are progressing in the subject and plan tasks and questions that will challenge and interest them. Year 6 pupils spoke highly of the fun they have in science lessons now because they are expected to think for themselves and work with partners to come to conclusions, which they write up using notes they made during their investigations. All of these developments have led to a more consistent approach to teaching and learning. There is now a high proportion of teaching that is good, which is reflected in pupils' accelerating progress and in teachers' high expectations of what pupils can do.

The new headteacher has given a strong lead in developing the roles of leaders, managers and the governing body in the last year. All are now clear about the part they play in improving the school and have regular opportunities to monitor aspects of its work. This is improving their knowledge of the school and giving them a clear picture of where further improvements are needed. The governing body now has a full quota of members, who have formed committees to ensure all aspects of the school's work are monitored. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show that it is not only able to, but now do challenge the school over proposed developments. Key changes in leadership responsibilities are planned for the Early Years Foundation Stage and a single unit will be established from the start of the next school year. While provision in the Nursery has improved with support from the local authority, there is still some way for it to go to match the quality of that in the Reception class. For example, in the deployment of support staff and in planning to meet individual children's needs so that they are constantly moving forward in their learning and their progress matches that of Reception children.

The local authority has provided good support for the school in developing the roles of leaders, managers and the governing body. Its officers have also given good support to the development of provision in the Nursery and of teaching in phonics, writing and science.

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,

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 14 October 2009**

- Raise standards particularly in writing and science by:
  - providing more opportunity for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects
  - making sure that pupils' achievements in science are assessed regularly and that this information is used effectively to provide work that meets their needs.
  
- Accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - making sure that the good teaching practices evident in Year 6 are consistently applied across the school
  - improving the quality of provision for children in the Nursery.
  
- Extend the skills of leaders, managers and the governing body, so that the responsibility for reviewing the school's performance, monitoring the quality of provision and driving improvements can be shared more equitably.