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15 September 2011

Mr Paul Heery  
Headteacher  
St Bede's Catholic Middle School  
Holloway Lane  
Redditch  
B98 7HA

Dear Mr Heery

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Bede's Catholic Middle School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school with my colleague Steve McKenna, additional inspector, on 14 September 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils and staff for their help and cooperation during our visit.

Since the time of the previous inspection a number of staff, including the headteacher have retired or left and the new headteacher took up the post at the start of September 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 23 June 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.

Pupils join the school with standards which are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress in Years 5 and 6, and results in the Key Stage 2 tests this summer have improved and are average. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 and 8, and results from the school's assessments at the end of Year 8 show that standards are above average. Observations of lessons show that the majority of pupils make good progress and the school has rightly identified the need to build upon this success and to raise standards higher for Key Stage 2 pupils. The school's records show that standards in mathematics in all years have improved, as has the progress made by pupils.



The quality of teaching and learning has improved. The majority lessons observed were good. They were engaging with a swift pace. Staff used the interactive whiteboards well to motivate pupils. As one pupil said, 'I haven't been to a lesson this term and thought I don't want to be here.' Pupils are very supportive of the school and comment that lessons are now more interesting and engaging. They particularly enjoy group work. Hence attendance is high. The behaviour observed during the visit and comments made by pupils show that behaviour is good. Pupils make good use of their planners to ensure parents and carers have a good understanding of how well they are progressing. This is supplemented by three meetings a year when parents and carers get both written and face-to-face information on how well their children are doing.

The school's specialist area of science has been used well to improve the quality of science lessons. These often involve experiments but the need for accurate recording is integral to these lessons, as are health and safety aspects.

Joint work with the local high school, which shares the specialism, and the local authority have improved the quality of teaching and learning within mathematics and overall. Lessons are engaging and staff use questions well to develop pupils' reasoning, giving pupils time to respond or using small whiteboards to see all responses. Staff also use responses effectively as teaching points, especially when it appears a pupil has a misconception. The school recognises there is still work to do to ensure that the mathematics subject knowledge of all staff is secure and that cross-curricular elements of numeracy are firmly embedded across all subjects.

The present school development plan has reached the end of its timescale and the headteacher has worked well to quickly establish a common understanding with staff as to the priorities for further development. Improving further the quality of teaching and learning is central to the next stage. Leaders feel empowered to take responsibility and to lead on their designated areas. Staff share the senior leaders' ambition. The school has an accurate analysis of the quality of teaching and learning and has a clear overview of the teaching strengths of staff. There is a good programme of coaching and support to ensure the continual improvement of teaching.

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

Michael Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Ensure pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school by:
  - eradicating the small amount of inadequate teaching
  - ensuring pupils in lessons consistently learn at a brisk pace
  - ensuring teachers consistently ask appropriately challenging questions and adopt strategies to ensure that all pupils have to think about responses
  - increase subject expertise in the teaching of mathematics
  - giving parents more guidance on how they can support their child's learning.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring the school's strategic planning communicates more clearly the priority the school is giving to improving teaching and ensuring more consistent progress
  - ensuring greater consistency of expectations across the key stages
  - using the school's recently acquired specialist status in science to further raise standards, particularly in mathematics
  - increasing the effectiveness of professional development in order that the highly effective practice in the school is more consistently adopted by all, and that more teachers can confidently demonstrate outstanding teaching.