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Mr J Robertshaw
Headteacher
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Colne
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Lancashire
BB8 7JR

Dear Mr Robertshaw

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Colne

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 October 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 Parish Priest, the Chair of Governors, local authority officer, staff and pupils whom I met.

Since the inspection in April 2010, there have been considerable changes to staffing. Three substantive teachers present at that inspection remain, the rest are newly appointed or on contract. Two new substantive assistant headteachers have been appointed: the current Year 5 teacher and the recently appointed Early Years and Key Stage 1 manager. Temporary or newly qualified teachers are currently teaching in Years 1, 2 and 3. The governing body is almost completely staffed with new members. There has been extensive building work carried out since the last inspection: the Early Years Foundation Stage area and Year 1 classroom have been remodelled; a new library installed and, at the time of this inspection, building work was underway to extend and refurbish the Key Stage 2 classrooms.

As a result of the inspection on 28 and 29 April 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement remains similar to that noted at the last inspection. By age 11, pupils reach broadly average levels of attainment but their progress over time is uneven. In the 2011 national tests for 11-year-olds, the results in reading and writing were slightly above the national figure and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals performed as well as their classmates. All pupils made the expected two levels progress from Key Stage 1. As a consequence of the better provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the proportion of pupils now entering Key Stage 1 having attained a good level of development is in line with

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the national figure. Their early reading and writing skills are particularly well developed. This is an improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection. In recent years, the teaching in Years 1 and 2 has not focused sufficiently well on developing pupils' literacy and mathematics skills and the school's results in national assessments for seven-year-olds, in 2010 and 2011, were significantly below the national figure. The picture in Key Stage 1 is improving, although the focus on early reading and writing is still not sharp enough. Some of the teaching observed during this inspection missed the mark and was too focused on delivering a set lesson rather than tackling the necessary next steps in pupils' writing or reading. The teaching was focused, for example, on meeting one particular objective that was too hard for some pupils and too easy for others. Teaching is stronger in Key Stage 2. Pupils find the more creative curriculum, with cross subjects links, engaging. They enjoy their lessons and they know a lot and can discuss in some detail, for example, the phases of the moon, how muscles work and the plight of poor children in Victorian workhouses. The quality of the written work in pupils' books does not reflect their knowledge and understanding; a legacy of weaker teaching in earlier years.

There has been much work done since the last inspection to strengthen the quality of teaching and improve pupils' progress. The headteacher undertakes regular lesson observations and the feedback is secure and robust. Professional development for teachers and teaching assistants has contributed to lessons becoming more engaging, allowing pupils to develop some independence and teaching assistants have clear roles within lessons. The whole-school assessment system is more embedded and is linked to clearer targets for individual pupils.

The local authority has a clear picture of the school's position and provides good, effective support.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise achievement by:
 - using assessment data more effectively to track pupils' progress consistently
 - improving the quality of teaching so that it consistently presents the right level of challenge to different groups of pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
 - improving the quality and deployment of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning effectively.