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Mrs Patricia Hurd
Headteacher
St George's Catholic Primary School
Uplands Avenue
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DE23 1GG

Dear Mrs Hurd

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 January, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body with whom I spoke, for their time and courtesy. I would like particularly to thank the pupils for the most enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the previous inspection, the senior management team has been restructured and now includes the headteacher, deputy headteacher and one part-time assistant headteacher. There have also been a number of changes in staffing, with several new staff appointed recently.

As a result of the inspection on 24 November 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.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The unvalidated results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2011 indicate that overall attainment is in line with the national average. This represents an improvement on the previous year when attainment was below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in is line with the national average in mathematics but below in English. School tracking data shows that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in lessons and over time, with many making good progress. These developments are the result of improving provision

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and raised expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because of the good support they receive.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is strengthening. Extremely positive relationships exist between staff and pupils, and classrooms are effectively managed. Where teaching is good, teachers share clear learning intentions, make effective use of questioning, engage pupils in purposeful learning and ensure that more-able pupils are suitably challenged. However, in some classes, teachers are not consistently using assessment information to structure the main parts of lessons, or independent tasks, well enough for more-able pupils. As a result, sometimes these pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Teaching assistants are being used effectively and are an integral part of all lessons, promoting learning for all, as well as the groups they support. The school has rightly identified that the curriculum should retain an appropriate focus on English and mathematics to support raised attainment in these subjects. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'creative curriculum' which has been introduced and includes a wide range of exciting topics such as, 'Lights, Camera, Action' and 'Superheroes'. This approach to delivering the curriculum is ensuring that all pupils are highly motivated by relevant topic work, with an appropriate focus on developing and applying their key literacy and numeracy skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school. They say that they feel safe at school, enjoy good friendships and that there is no intimidating or poor behaviour.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Senior and middle leaders are knowledgeable in their areas as well as effective in their leadership roles, so that teamwork is strong and staff morale high. Action planning is appropriate and is focused on accelerating pupils' progress and raising attainment. The school recognises that there is a need to review the timescales for subject action plans to improve strategic, long-term planning. The monitoring of teaching and learning is robust and is ensuring that important improvements are being made. As a result, pupils' progress is steadily accelerating and attainment is rising. The governing body is supportive, is increasingly holding the school to account and has an increased involvement in evaluating the impact of the school's work.

The school has had several changes of local authority advisers in quick succession, resulting in inconsistent support. However, the current adviser has visited the school on two occasions recently and is gaining a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Make all teaching good or better to accelerate progress by ensuring that:
 - full use is made of assessment information to plan learning tasks that are suitable challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly those capable of attaining higher levels
 - pupils and teaching assistants are actively engaged from the outset of lessons
 - more effective use is made of questioning skills to assess pupils' understanding and extend their thinking and reasoning skills.

- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that there is a consistent emphasis on the application of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in relevant and challenging ways in all topic work.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - monitoring and evaluation are clearly focused on pupils' learning and the impact of strategies to raise attainment
 - middle leaders have the skills necessary to identify what individual teachers need to do to make sure that pupils' progress is consistently good.