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11 January 2012

Mrs B Bowles
The Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Lawton Avenue
Carterton
Oxfordshire
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Dear Mrs Bowles

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please also thank the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Officer, the staff and the pupils who gave their time to speak to me.

Since the last inspection there have been a few staff changes, mainly in January 2012. The school has appointed a new full-time teacher, this appointment has enabled the class structure to be re-organised resulting in smaller class sizes. A part-time teacher has also been appointed to support small group work. At the time of the monitoring inspection, one teacher was absent; a supply teacher was teaching the class.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 September 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 the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is satisfactory.

Following a dip in attainment at Key Stage 1 in 2010, standards recovered in 2011 to be broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2011 and was above average. However, the proportion of more-able pupils who reached the higher level of attainment in 2011 was below the national average. Attainment overall was broadly in line with national averages, although writing remains weaker than reading and mathematics. In addition, current school data show that the legacy of underachievement among the

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older pupils remains. From Year 1 to Year 6, progress continues to be inconsistent. However, progress accelerates in Year 6 because teaching is more effective and pupils are provided with greater challenge in lessons.

Pupils are becoming increasingly engaged in the learning process. Explanations at the start of lessons are clear and pupils are more actively involved in learning throughout the lesson. In one class pupils were successfully plotting coordinates on a quadrant and were able to reflect the coordinates using plus and minus numbers. Some pupils are able to articulate their learning well. However, this is inconsistent. In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' learning and progress, including those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, were generally satisfactory. This is consistent with the school's internal assessments and the evidence in pupils' books, which show that pupils' achievement is also satisfactory.

The school has recently introduced a new pupil tracking system with the support of the local authority, which is more precisely focused on the progress pupils make in their learning. The system enables teachers to identify pupils at risk of underachievement and supports them to put appropriate support in place to accelerate pupils' progress. The pupil tracking system also means that teachers are held more accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. Although the school has improved the systems for identifying underachievement, the use of feedback to pupils is too limited. Insufficient attention is given to high-quality marking which provide pupils with their next steps in learning. In addition, the use of targets, particularly in writing and mathematics, is underdeveloped.

Pupils generally enjoy coming to school and feel safe. The appointment of a family-liaison worker has strengthened relationships and improved channels of communication, particularly with the Traveller community and military families. Pupils, along with parents and carers, are more aware of the need for regular attendance. Letters sent to families communicate clearly the importance of good attendance at school. Pupils are congratulated for regular and improved attendance. However, levels of attendance remain low for particular groups of pupils which impacts negatively on their progress in learning.

The school has focused on improving pupils' behaviour and the success of the 'Behaviour Game' was evident during discussions with pupils. They were very positive and enthusiastic about playing the 'Behaviour Game', which encourages self-control and a sense of personal responsibility. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school has improved; however, pupils know that instances of inappropriate behaviour remain. The school is aware of this issue.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's new single plan has a clear focus on further improving the quality of teaching. Through coaching and mentoring, the headteacher is supporting teachers to improve their teaching skills, encouraging

collaboration and increasing pupils' independence in learning. Despite the focus on improvements, the sharing of good practice is at an early stage of development. This means the capacity to sustain further improvement is no better than satisfactory.

The school is working in partnership with five local schools to develop good practice in monitoring and evaluation. School leaders value the support provided by the local authority and the increased challenge provided through the School Improvement Officer since September 2011.

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

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Work closely with parents and carers to raise the attendance rate and to prevent individual pupils from becoming frequent absentees.
- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, ensuring that teaching is good in at least 60% of lessons by May 2011, by:
 - making sure that that all teachers focus sharply on the next steps in learning for each pupil, consistently challenging the more able and giving the right balance of support and challenge to others
 - making sure that pupils know what they are aiming to achieve in each lesson and how successful they are in reaching their learning goals
 - providing clear explanations at all points in lessons and ensuring that whole-class sessions are not too long
 - giving pupils opportunities to respond to the written feedback provided on their work.
- Strengthen the school's capacity for and the pace of its improvement, by:
 - sharing good practice, particularly in teaching, in order to develop provision and tackle weaknesses
 - ensuring all staff are involved in actively driving improvement and are fully accountable for pupils' progress.