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14 January 2013

Miss Jennifer O'Prey  
Headteacher  
St Dominic Catholic Primary School  
Southampton Road  
London  
NW5 4JS

Dear Miss O'Prey,

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Dominic Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on Monday 14 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The lead inspector visited every class with the headteacher to gain a view on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

**Context**

Since the previous section 5 inspection, the literacy leader has resigned from her post, and the post holder for Key Stage 2 and science has relinquished her responsibilities. A teacher in Reception class has had her contract terminated and the premises manager has resigned. Arrangements for grouping pupils in Year 6 have changed to address the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable to underachievement. Pupils are now set according to their ability for the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

## **Main findings**

The school's action plan addresses all of the areas for improvement identified in the previous section 5 inspection. The timescale is realistic and it is clear who is to monitor progress, and how progress against the action plan will be measured. Evaluation processes are regular and progress is monitored both at weekly meetings between the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body, as well as at scheduled meetings of the governing body. The school has logged in detail all of the actions taken since the previous section 5 inspection, but has not always identified the impact of these actions.

Some vacancies at middle leadership level are yet to be filled, but the headteacher and members of the governing body are determined to recruit only the most suitable candidates. The non-teaching headteacher and deputy headteacher have made effective use of time available to monitor the quality of teaching and to start to implement the school improvement plan. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised through the introduction of the 'Challenge and Choice' initiative in lessons which allows pupils to set themselves challenging targets. Staff training has been provided for all, including for support staff, in order to maximise the impact of additional adults in the classroom. A review of provision for disabled pupils and those with special education needs took place in November and recommendations arising from this review have begun to be put in place.

Members of the governing body are aware of their key role in raising standards and have received useful training on safeguarding, pupil premium funding and on how to interpret school performance data. A recently conducted audit of skills among the governing body has helped identify any gaps in experience or knowledge. Members of the governing body are keen to further develop their governance skills, and welcome the local authority's offer to work closely with them in this area. Governors are about to participate in their first formal monitoring visit where they will visit lessons, meet with groups of pupils and have discussions with members of staff. The findings of these visits will be fed back to the school's senior leaders and will form the basis for challenging discussions between governors and senior staff.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- measure the impact of all actions taken since the previous section 5 inspection when relevant information becomes available
- strengthen and embed leadership across the school by recruiting high calibre members of staff at middle leadership level
- continue to provide relevant training to members of the governing body.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

**External support**

The school benefits from an appropriate level of support provided by the local authority through the work of the School Improvement Partner and other consultants. A good working relationship also exists between St Dominic's and a local outstanding primary school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Camden and as below.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**