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23 April 2013

Mrs E Grimshaw  
Headteacher  
St Antony's RC Primary School  
Shadsworth Road  
Blackburn  
Lancashire  
BB1 2HP

Dear Mrs Grimshaw

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Antony's RC Primary School, Blackburn with Darwen**

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 2013 with Drew Crawshaw HMI, 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and the assistant headteacher who has overall responsibility for Key Stage 2. I also met with the school improvement officer from the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documents including the school development plan, the post Ofsted action plan and the minutes of those governing body meetings that have taken place since the inspection. I also took the opportunity to look at the school's current data on pupils' progress and examined the work in a sample of their books so that I could assess the quality of marking.

#### **Context**

There have been no changes to staffing since the previous inspection. However, senior leaders have carried out a review of how staff are deployed in the school. As a result the governors are seeking to strengthen the management team and are advertising for a teacher to join you and take responsibility for the leadership and management of lower Key Stage 2. This is the area of the school that relates to Years 3 and 4. In addition, from September 2013, to further improve the quality of teaching in music and religious education, pupils will be taught by a specialist teacher of both subjects.

## **Main findings**

The school development plan addresses the main areas for improvement and is supplemented by a separate Ofsted action plan, written in response to the inspection. This plan describes the actions leaders and managers will take to address each of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors. These include improving the quality of teaching and reviewing the deployment of staff, particularly at Key Stage 2, so that teachers' expertise is used more effectively to drive up standards.

Although the post Ofsted action plan is detailed it is not sharp enough. The targets for improvement are not in an order of priority. So it is hard to tell which are the most important. Staff who have responsibility for each target have not been identified. It is also not clear how the governing body will check that the actions being taken are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Senior leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is now more robust. They are taking effective action to improve lesson planning so that the needs of all pupils are catered for in lessons. Early indications from the school's achievement data are that this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Senior leaders have reviewed the school's marking policy since the inspection and a revised version has recently been introduced. Pupils' books are marked regularly and pupils receive praise when work has been done well. However, pupils are often not given enough information about how they can improve their work and when they are, pupils do not always follow it up. Consequently opportunities are missed for pupils to learn from their mistakes.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, I would recommend that further action is taken to:

- sharpen the post Ofsted action plan so that it is clear what the order of priorities are; identify who has responsibility for each of the actions to improve the school and clarify how governors will check the impact of these actions on outcomes for pupils
- embed the school's new marking policy so that pupils receive high quality feedback from all their teachers and are given opportunities to follow it up so that they are able improve their work.

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

## **External support**

The local authority school improvement officer continues to provide effective support for senior leaders in their drive to improve the school. Since the inspection this support and guidance has been geared to improving the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford and the Director of Children's Services for Blackburn with Darwen.

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry

**Her Majesty's Inspector**