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24 June 2013

Ms Jacqui Wright  
Headteacher  
St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate  
Nash Road  
Margate  
CT9 4BU

Dear Ms Wright

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate**

Following my visit to your school on 21 June 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan and governing body action plan were evaluated. A range of documentation including governing body minutes, current data about pupils' progress and records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching was also reviewed. We went on a tour of the school to identify the impact of actions taken to strengthen teaching and raise achievement since the last inspection.

### **Main findings**

An appropriate sense of ambition and urgency exist. There is a 'can do' approach. Senior leaders and governors have responded quickly and with a determined approach to the recommendations from the section 5 inspection. They are wholly committed to raising teachers' expectations and understanding of what constitutes

'good' and 'outstanding' progress, as well as further strengthening the quality of teaching.

Monitoring is successfully raising teachers' expectations. Monitoring of the quality of teaching, planning, pupils' workbooks and progress data by senior leaders is extensive and systematic. Feedback is provided, with strengths and improvements required identified. A range of initiatives including use of staff meeting time, attendance at courses and coaching is being used to ensure that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Most recent monitoring indicates accurate use of assessment information and lesson planning that more clearly addresses the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Marking is increasingly purposeful, although some inconsistency in marking style remains. Examples of good practice are being identified and discussed during staff meetings. Teachers have responded positively to opportunities such as 'swapping' classes to practise their own assessment skills. As a result teachers are gaining a clearer view of the constituent parts of good and better practice and teaching is improving more rapidly. End of Key Stage 1 assessments have risen by over 15% at Level 2b+ in mathematics this year and teacher assessments in Year 6 show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reading at or above expected levels for their age. Senior leaders hold a precise view of pupils' achievements as well as progress towards whole school priorities.

Teachers and teaching assistants have an improved understanding of their own responsibilities for raising pupils' achievement. Clear expectations and regular pupil progress meetings ensure all teachers know exactly the targets they are working towards and individual pupils' learning needs are correctly identified and planned for. Processes for the performance management of staff ensure that accountability and expectations are increasingly explicit. Middle leaders now have a better understanding of how data can be used as a tool to support learning and raise achievement.

Although the review of governance has yet to take place, it is clear that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have acted swiftly on the findings of the previous inspection. They have a more accurate view of the school and are receiving bespoke support from a National Leader of Governance as well as from the local authority. There is already evidence of strong governor participation in planning for improvement, monitoring and review. New governors are receiving mentoring to ensure they quickly assimilate the necessary knowledge and skill. Governors receive comprehensive, accurate information from the headteacher and minutes of more recent meetings reveal significant challenge being levelled at senior staff.

The school improvement plan, which has been amended since the previous inspection, is precisely targeted on the areas for improvement. The plan contains clear objectives and success criteria and details roles and responsibilities such as who is monitoring what, how and when. Evaluations tend to be 'wordy' and descriptive of actions; however, vital evaluative information is also included. All school planning is tightly focused on increasing pupils' achievement through further

raising the quality of teaching and strengthening leadership and its impact on teaching and pupils' progress. Time-frames are explicit and ambitious.

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:

- complete the review of governance and ensure that all members of the governing body understand and carry out their roles
- ensure that the headteacher's report to the governing body includes clear reference to the areas for improvement and that the minutes of governing body meetings record subsequent discussion, challenge, monitoring and evaluation of progress
- sharpen evaluations of progress by making clear reference to exactly what has improved for pupils as a result (eg the percentage of pupils reading at L4+ has risen from X to Y).

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority was providing light touch support to the school prior to inspection. This has been stepped up and rigorous six weekly review meetings are now being held. Governors report very favorably on the quality and impact of training received from the local authority. The school also draws valuable and highly relevant support from the Thanet Catholic Schools' Collaboration.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent and the Diocese of Kent.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**