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17 July 2013

Mr Con Bonner  
Headteacher  
St Ignatius RC Primary School  
St Ann's Road  
Tottenham  
London  
N15 6ND

Dear Mr Bonner

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Ignatius Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 16 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy and assistant headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a recently-appointed governor, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Accompanied by you and the assistant headteacher, I made short visits to six lessons. The school improvement action plan was evaluated; the recent review of governance was scrutinised as well as the most assessment information for the current school year, and monitoring of teaching records.

## Context

There have been no significant changes in staffing since the section 5 inspection. Six teachers will leave at the end of this term; appointment processes for their replacements are still on-going.

## Main findings

After initial disappointment about the overall inspection grade, you have decisively instigated six major actions to address key issues raised in the inspection report. Over the past eight weeks, you have

- commissioned an external review of governance, with the assessor's report and recommendations published on 7 July
- introduced new processes for evaluating the quality of teaching, including through '360° observation'
- drafted a new staff performance management system in consultation with external employment professionals
- provided focussed training events for staff and governors involving external expertise
- established new links with other schools and worked in partnership with another local school judged to require improvement
- re-engaged with the local authority school improvement service.

These actions reflect your willingness and determination to move the school back to its previous 'good' rating. They have also helped to reinforce the scale of the job still to be done. The provisional 2013 test results for English and mathematics suggest a marked improvement on 2012. However, you are open and honest in acknowledging that these were achieved through considerable additional intervention and support, rather than through consistently good day-to-day teaching and learning.

Furthermore, you recognise that a concerted emphasis on preparing for the tests has resulted in a much reduced focus on the foundation subjects, particularly in Year 6. You acknowledge that in other year groups, while the foundation subjects are covered, some subject skills are taught in limited depth. We discussed the importance of providing high-quality learning experiences across the curriculum, particularly to ensure that pupils enjoy good cultural education. The new school year, starting in September, provides an ideal opportunity for you to re-emphasise the importance of thoroughly good day-to-day teaching in all subjects and in all year groups.

It is extremely helpful that the review of the governance has taken place so swiftly. The review's recommendations are commendably sharp and to the point. These make it clear that significant changes in the governing body's strategy and operation are required if leadership and management are to be judged good at the next inspection. In our meeting, the Chair of the Governing Body suggested that these could be achieved through further training and professional support. However, the

review findings suggest that much more radical changes are needed if governance is to improve significantly. I agree.

Finally, while the school's post-Ofsted action plan broadly covers the areas for improvement, it is not precise enough. Too much appears dependent on the headteacher, and targets to be reached at key moments before the next inspection are not specific enough. The plan is not in a format or length that is easily accessible to staff, parents and governors; it is more a document for the senior leadership team.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. To build on this good start, the school should take further action to:

- convene an extraordinary meeting of the governing body to consider the findings of the independent review and agree the school's response, so that any changes are in place and operational by 1 October 2013
- use the start of the new academic year to promote renewed expectations for high quality day-to-day teaching in all lessons; and to ensure that high quality skills and knowledge are taught in foundation subjects
- re-draft the post-Ofsted action plan, stating clear expectations for the progress expected by 1 January 2014 and 1 June 2014, and ensuring that all members of the leadership have lines of accountability. Appropriate versions of this plan should be provided for senior leaders, staff, governors and parents.

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 school has benefitted from its increased engagement with the local authority by using the school improvement adviser for training, and through brokering links with other schools. The local authority has also appointed a new governor who shows refreshing determination and a good insight into the key issues facing the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**