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15 July 2013

Mrs Christine Ryding  
Headteacher  
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hindley Green  
Swan Lane  
Hindley Green  
Wigan  
Lancashire  
WN2 4HD

Dear Mrs Ryding

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hindley Green, Wigan**

Following my visit to your school on 12 July 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I had meetings with you, the Deputy Headteacher and three representatives of the Governing Body including the Chair, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met a representative of the Local Authority. I evaluated the school's action plans, tracking data and observation records and had a tour of the school visiting lessons.

**Context**

Since the inspection one member of the school's teaching staff has been absent due to illness and three members of the Governing Body have recently resigned their positions. Two new teachers have been appointed from September 2013, one of whom is a newly qualified teacher.

**Main findings**

The leadership team has used the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection as a key driver to set targets to improve the quality of teaching and effectiveness of leadership and

management. The plan includes appropriate objectives and reference to costs. Success criteria identify high expectations but should be refined to make clear what evidence will be used to check that action results in impact and identifying the individuals who are accountable.

Since the inspection you and your Deputy Headteacher have increased your checks on the quality of teaching including watching teachers in all year groups. This has allowed you to identify areas for improvement and plan the next steps. For example, the release of your Deputy Headteacher from his class on a regular basis to allow him to work with other staff. This allows your Deputy, and through him the senior leaders, to have a better insight into the quality of teaching, marking and learning.

The use of your new electronic system allows you to collate and report your findings regarding the overall strengths and areas for development of teaching. You use it to ensure that targets and next steps for improvement are followed up. Where your observations have raised any concerns you have been quick to take immediate and decisive action to deal with the concern.

You are keen to set a clear and high threshold for a standard of teaching you will accept. To secure this and communicate your expectations you have reviewed and published a new 'teaching and learning policy'. This policy defines your expectations of what good teaching is, without prescribing any particular teaching style and also identifies the behaviours you expect to see from both pupils and staff. This clarity allows you to hold teachers to account for their standard of teaching.

Additional training delivered to teaching assistants and the way you are now using them to support pupils has improved their impact.

Although the detailed ICT action plan for curriculum developments is not expected to be finalised until the end of September some improvement has begun to happen.

The governing body moved quickly following the inspection to improve their effectiveness. They formed an action plan committee and sought advice from the Local Authority. A skills audit is nearing completion and a full effectiveness review is timetabled for September. The governors interviewed had a good understanding of what now needs to be done to help the school improve further and were clear in their commitment to recruit new governors with skills that would fill identified gaps arising from the skills audit.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- clearly identify the persons responsible for taking action and identify the evidence used to evaluate of progress against success criteria.
- further develop the involvement of middle leaders in monitoring activities and the reporting of their findings to the governing body.
- ensure the ICT action plan is completed within the agreed timescales and builds upon the

work done during this term to identify needs and provide internet access to support learning.

- attend an Ofsted Seminar 'getting to good'.

I may carry out further visits and, we discussed how I might provide support and challenge to the school before its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school continues to draw effectively on the support of the LA. The school's advisor has brokered the support of a local teaching school who has worked closely with the school to plan high quality induction for the newly appointed teachers. Additionally the Local Authority Advisor is supporting the governing body in formally reviewing its effectiveness.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

**Her Majesty's Inspector**