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25 November 2013

Mrs Val Plant  
Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brindle  
Bournes Row  
Hoghton  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR5 0DQ

Dear Mrs Plant

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brindle, Lancashire**

Following my visit to your school on 22 November 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 September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- Revise the action plan to include milestones so that senior leaders and governors can check how successful it is at key points during the year.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, members of the Governing Body and representatives of the Local Authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan and other documentation related to school improvement were evaluated. We also visited every class to see the impact of your actions.

## **Context**

A new Chair of the Governing Body has recently been elected.

## **Main findings**

The school's ambitious action plan builds upon the positive work identified in the last inspection and contains long term targets and actions that are clear and appropriate based on the areas for improvement. However, the plan should be further enhanced to include measurable milestones that allow you and the governors to check its success.

You are working hard to continue the rapid pace of improvement in teaching and have increased the frequency of checks to ensure this. These include more regular observations of teachers at work, weekly checks on their planning and regular examination of work in books. This has led you to identify where things need to improve and where specific support is needed.

The quality of assessment is improving because of the checks you are making on the accuracy of teacher's judgements. You have reviewed the assessment policy and established clear expectations of what must be done. For example, the need for teachers to evaluate the progress of groups to ensure teaching matches pupil's needs more precisely so that they can make good progress from their starting points.

This increased detail in your checks means that governors are better informed about how the school is performing.

Progress in upper Key Stage 2 is improving, because you have reorganised classes so that years 5 and 6 to be taught separately in the mornings. This means that tasks are better matched to the needs and abilities of pupils and has resulted in an increased pace of teaching and learning. As a result many pupils are making better than expected progress at this point in the year.

Your careful use of targets in English and mathematics has raised expectations of what pupils can do.

Teaching is improving because you have acted quickly to secure support from neighbouring schools. Teachers have taken part in joint training events and visited other teachers who are recognised for their good practice. Furthermore you check and record the impact these visits have on the quality of teaching and on learning.

Governors have wasted no time since the inspection on making improvements. For instance, they have identified their training needs and commissioned appropriate support to help improve their knowledge and ability to challenge to the school. In addition they have restructured their committees so that they can focus more

sharply on holding leaders to account. Minutes show that the school's 'standards and effectiveness committee' is improving the way in which they analyse information and challenge leaders.

An external review of governance has already been recently completed and governors are awaiting the formal report.

### **External support**

The Local Authority is providing effective support which is enhancing the strong leadership of the headteacher. It has worked effectively with senior leaders to check their judgments and with governors, to support their development.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [ [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) ] – for academies