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22 September 2014

Anoushka De Sampayo  
Headteacher  
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School  
Burlington Road  
New Malden  
Surrey  
KT3 4ND

Dear Mrs De Sampayo

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 2014. 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:

- strengthen its work to evaluate the impact of strategies intended to improve teaching.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's improvement plan was evaluated. We

made short visits to all classrooms during which we looked briefly at pupils' work. I spoke with, and observed, pupils in the playground during the morning break.

## **Context**

There have been no changes to the school's staffing since the inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader now has a permanent leadership responsibility.

## **Main findings**

Governors and senior leaders are committed to bringing about the improvements needed. Staff have responded positively to the increase in leaders' expectations of them. Teachers report that their focus has shifted from 'what pupils do' to 'what pupils learn'. This is reflected in the way tasks are introduced to pupils at the start of lessons.

The school's development plan encompasses the areas for improvement listed in the inspection report. It describes the actions to be taken, who will lead each, and what leaders will do to check that they have been completed. There is a clear expectation that governors will evaluate its impact through regular reports from leaders. Leaders have led meetings for parents to explain the planned action. Parents' suggestions have been taken in to account in the writing of the plan.

Pupils have fewer workbooks now. Much of their work is recorded in 'learning journals'. As a result, teachers have consistent expectations of pupils' presentation and written skills in all subjects. Expectations of pupils' presentation are clear and were outlined to pupils at the start of the term. While most pupils comply with these expectations, there is some inconsistency.

Arrangements at the start of the school day have been reviewed. Parents and carers now say goodbye to children at the school gate; leaders are present to greet pupils. Pupils go straight to their classes where they begin their 'early morning work'. Leaders report that this has led to a calmer start to the day with fewer incidents of poor behaviour and an improvement in pupils' concentration during the first lesson.

A review of the school's home learning policy took into account the views of teachers and governors as well as parental feedback collected during the summer term. Leaders have laid out clearly their rationale for home learning as well as the time pupils are expected to devote to it.

To improve the reliability of teachers' judgements about the quality of pupils' work, teachers from Year 2, Year 6 and the Early Years Foundation Stage worked with local authority officers and staff from other schools during the summer term. Teachers and middle leaders now have more accessible information about the performance of different groups of pupils and the levels they are expected to attain. They use this to be better at adapting their teaching to the needs of the pupils.

Leaders have put in place a system to check that pupils are making, or exceeding the progress expected. Procedures include measures to support pupils whose progress needs to be more rapid.

Teachers have received training about how to provide more accurately for the needs of pupils of different abilities. Older pupils explained that teachers provide work at several levels of difficulty during the same lesson. However, from brief visits to classrooms during the inspection, it is clear that some pupils are not challenged sufficiently and they practise concepts with which they are already familiar. Leaders could make more regular visits to classrooms to observe teaching and to look more closely at the quality of pupils' work.

The school has reviewed its approach to behaviour management. Clear and consistent messages about the expectations in the classroom, playground, communal areas and hall have been agreed. Pupils' behaviour, including at break times is logged systematically. As a result of this robust approach, significantly fewer incidents of poor behaviour occur. Parents are now contacted at an earlier stage if their child's behaviour gives rise to concern. Pupils are clear about the systems in place and speak enthusiastically about these improvements.

Inspired by the London 2012 Olympic Games, the school has adopted the motto 'be the best that you can be' in a move to raise pupils' aspirations. As part of the school's implementation of the new National Curriculum, new topics have been put in place throughout the school. As a result pupils say that they are more interested in what they are learning.

The recommended review of the school's use of the pupil premium is taking place later this term. Improvements are evident. For example, pupils who have the greatest difficulty in understanding concepts now receive support from appropriately trained staff. Additional, specialised resources have been purchased so that more tailored support can be provided.

The review of governance is underway and is due to be completed by the end of this month. Governors have already taken action to ensure that detailed information about the performance of groups of pupils, including those eligible for support from pupil premium funding, is shared by school leaders.

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 has rapidly increased its involvement with the school, providing support for several aspects of its work. It has brokered support from a literacy consultant who has supported staff in Key Stage 1 with their teaching of reading. This support contributed to an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3

last summer. Arrangements are in place for staff in Key Stage 1 to receive training in the teaching of mathematics. Following the local authority's review of the school's safeguarding arrangements, leaders have strengthened their relationship with local authority children's services teams so that quicker action can be taken to support vulnerable pupils. Due to the school's location close to the border of two local authorities, leaders have thoughtfully made links with the children's services teams of both.

The local authority has arranged for a Local Leader of Education to provide support for various aspects of the school's work. These include developing further links with parents and the community, and activities to support leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Local authority officers have reviewed the provision for disabled pupils and those with special education needs, as well as that for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although at an early stage, their recommendations have led to improvements. For example, children in the nursery and Reception classes now benefit from seeing a wider range of written language displayed.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**