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6 October 2014

Mrs Ela Wort  
Headteacher  
St William's Catholic Primary School, Pilling  
Garstang Road  
Pilling  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR3 6AL

Dear Mrs Wort

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

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 July 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:

- ensure that all children respond to the questions teachers pose for them in feedback so as to accelerate their progress even further
- ensure that the school's website complies with current requirements.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a group of parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, the governor who chairs the curriculum committee and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I attended morning assembly, visited both classes and considered data indicating the progress being made by pupils currently in school. I read a wide range of exercise books from pupils of different ages.

## Context

There have been no changes to staffing or governance since the previous inspection.

## Main findings

You were disappointed by the outcome of the recent section 5 inspection and you show absolute determination to lead St William's to a position where it can demonstrate that it is good or better. You have the resolute support from parents of pupils on roll at the school. All of those who met with me or submitted correspondence gave highly positive accounts of your work in ensuring their children's individual needs are met. They comment that they receive clear information about their children's performance and that you consistently 'go the extra mile' to provide support. They regard your approach as 'firm and fair' and provide many examples of ways in which you have helped children and their families.

Your improvement plan addresses the areas for improvement identified at the recent inspection, and includes detail of who will lead key actions, monitor and evaluate their impact. The plan is kept under close review by the governing body and the local authority. Reporting arrangements within school have been streamlined and lines of accountability are clear.

You have adjusted your own teaching commitments to ensure that you provide support to staff and pupils where it is most needed. Your understanding of the skills and needs of each individual child is comprehensive, as is that of your teachers; adjustments are made speedily to support children's learning because you communicate so well as a team.

Teachers have developed effective planning systems to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities of pupils within their classes while ensuring that a broad and balanced curriculum is accessed by all. Individuals' achievements are carefully assessed and a new tracking system has been developed that enables you and governors to have a more immediate understanding of how well children are doing.

Evidence from children's books and from their performance in recent assessments indicates that progress is accelerating. Children are adept at working independently and questioning each other. A group of Key Stage 1 pupils showed good concentration when they worked collaboratively to solve measuring problems. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were keen to share their learning journals, which provide evidence of their achievement in a range of subjects. These journals are beautifully presented and indicate pupils' strengthening progress and their reflections on their own learning. Their work on World War One is particularly impressive and letters written in the role of characters from Michael Morpurgo's *Private Peaceful* show great maturity. Aspects of the school's work, including the use of learning journals to exemplify pupils' independent skills development, are being shared as examples of effective practice with other schools in the local authority. Visitors to the school have commented positively on the impact of advice and 'inspiration' provided by St William's staff.

Teachers' marking generally gives pupils clear feedback on their work and often poses additional questions for them to answer. In the best examples there is lively dialogue between teachers and pupils on how to improve. In a few cases children have not got round to adding the detail that has been asked of them. The quality of pupils' presentation has improved, with earlier development of a more cursive script that is carefully modelled by teachers. Opportunities are taken to celebrate children's work. Those who shared their work in the school assembly glowed with pride and classroom displays reflect their interest and high aspirations.

In response to the external review, governors have formulated an action plan to inform improvements to their work. The governors with whom I met showed a clear understanding of their role and affirmed their support for your leadership. They recognise the need to enable parents of children currently on roll to have representation on the governing body. Governors are developing clear protocols as to how they should best work. They feel well-informed about the progress being made by pupils as a result of your improved action plan.

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 was in receipt of support from Lancashire local authority prior to the recent section 5 inspection and this has been maintained. A review of governance has been undertaken, led by a local authority officer. Consultant support to develop the quality of teaching and learning is having a positive impact on teachers' planning to maximise the progress of all individual children. You and your governors welcome the advisory support provided by the monitoring and intervention team which has included the development of better information management systems. The school is an active member of several local clusters that provide mutual support, including through the moderation of pupils' writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall

**Her Majesty's Inspector**