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Bernie Horton  
Executive Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
The Broadway  
Barking  
IG11 7AR

Dear Mrs Horton,

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

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Executive Headteacher, other senior leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Short visits were made to twelve classes and I talked informally with a number of pupils, as I toured the school. The school's action plan and a range of other documents were evaluated.

## **Context**

Since the last full inspection, the school has made six permanent teaching appointments, including two assistant headteachers. A further five posts are currently filled by supply teachers.

## **Main findings**

You have taken rapid steps to ensure that all teachers know the learning needs of their pupils and can use information to check pupils' progress to plan challenging and engaging tasks. The information about pupils' progress is detailed and checked regularly. This is helping leaders and teachers to tailor learning to pupils' needs more accurately. These first positive steps point to improvements in pupils' achievement for the future, as they become second nature to the day-to-day work of the school.

Teachers know the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities better. They direct the work of teaching assistants to support them. You have introduced differentiated learning schemes in mathematics to make sure that the most able pupils are well challenged to make good progress from their starting points. Work in their mathematics books as well as in English books shows that they are beginning to cover more work at the right level.

You have given a very strong and clear direction to your staff on how to improve the quality of marking and feedback to pupils, so that they know how to improve their work. As the recently introduced system is becoming normal practice, students are beginning to respond. This contributes to their learning. However practice is not yet fully consistent. In the same way, you have insisted that all staff use similar techniques to ensure that all pupils know the expectations you have for their attitudes to learning. This is leading to improvements in how well pupils learn and apply themselves.

The rigour with which leaders check the quality of teaching and learning has been strengthened. Subject leaders have a strong grasp of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching, because of the strong systems you have introduced. As these leaders develop their skills, they are increasingly effective in improving the quality of teaching. Where this cannot be achieved with support, you and the governing body take robust action. You have ensured that subject leaders have support and training, to make sure they have a confident knowledge of their subject specialism. This is helping them to train and coach the teachers they work with.

The current governing body took on responsibility for the school very shortly before the previous full inspection, following the move to become formally federated with St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Dagenham. Members of the governing body have a wide range of experience and have set about their duties with energy. They have put into place more rigorous processes to support and challenge the school.

They use their expertise to analyse and evaluate data to hold leaders in the school to account for the achievement of all pupils. The school has completed the first stage of an external review of governance and expect this to be finished by the end of the spring term.

All these steps are turning St Joseph's Catholic School in the right direction. However, there remains much to do on the journey of improvement to good or better.

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 provided good quality support and challenge to the school. The range of additional support provided is well-targeted and relates directly to the areas the school needs to improve most. This is making a good contribution to the improvements seen at this stage. You are making careful use of the additional resource available through the formal federation with St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Dagenham. This is providing the extra strength and experience needed to move the school forward.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Diocesan Director of Education and the Director of Children's Services for Barking and Dagenham.

Yours sincerely

Chris Campbell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**