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2 March 2015

Mrs Clare-Marie Burchall  
The Headteacher  
St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Swindon  
Davenwood  
Upper Stratton  
Swindon  
SN2 7LL

Dear Mrs Burchall

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Swindon**

Following my visit to your school on 2 March 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 October 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.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the current headteacher, the associate headteacher, other school leaders, members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and the recently appointed headteacher. Short visits to each class took place and the school action plan was evaluated.

## **Context**

A new headteacher has been appointed due to the retirement of the current headteacher. He will take up post at Easter 2015. An Early Years leader has also been appointed to take up post at the same time.

## **Main findings**

A very good start has been made to address the areas identified as in need of improvement at the recent Ofsted inspection. Leaders communicate determination to ensure that the school becomes at least good as quickly as possible. Expectations as to what students are able to achieve and the quality of teaching have been raised significantly. Rapid improvement is evident across the school.

Teachers are held more robustly to account for the quality of their teaching and the progress pupils make. Targets that are set for teachers have been strengthened. Targets require teachers to ensure pupils make at least good progress. Disadvantaged students, those eligible for extra funding, are required to make accelerated progress to ensure they achieve as well as, or even better than, their peers. Teachers take more responsibility for their own practice through evidencing the impact that their teaching has on pupils' progress at performance review meetings.

Helpful training is in place for teachers to develop their practice. Close links to a good school provide teachers with more opportunities to observe, and work alongside, effective teachers. Within the school, teachers observe each other's teaching more regularly. This allows them greater opportunities to work alongside each other to reflect on their own practice. During these observations, a key focus is now on the progress disadvantaged students make to judge the impact teaching has on the learning of this group of pupils.

The outcomes in 2014 for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 were much improved. The school's current predictions indicate that the progress pupils make will improve further. More opportunities are provided for pupils to complete regular extended pieces of writing in subjects other than literacy. The quality of writing seen in pupils' books shows that this aspect is improving rapidly. Parents are more involved in supporting their child's learning and progress through regular reports that are sent to them. Meetings are held between teachers, pupils and their parents to discuss the progress pupils have made and to agree any further support that is required.

Pupils' exhibit very positive attitudes to learning. They speak knowledgeably about their learning and teachers provide more effective written feedback to pupils when marking books. Pupils have more regular opportunities to respond to their teachers' feedback to evidence that they understand how to achieve higher levels.

The school's action plans accurately identify the key areas in need of improvement. Challenging targets are set and closely monitored. Governors have a better understanding of the strengths of the school and areas in need of further development. They have increased the number of visits they make to the school to gather their own evidence of improvements. A data committee has been implemented to allow governors to fully scrutinise the progress pupils, and groups of pupils, make. As a result, governors provide more effective challenge to leaders to ensure the school is on track to meet its targets.

### **External support**

The school draws on a range of effective support from a local good school, a teaching school and the school improvement partner.

Teachers benefit from individualised support to improve the quality of their teaching. The school improvement partner provides regular support and challenge to leaders. He closely monitors the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Reports to the governing body accurately reflect the positive progress the school is making. The reports also set clear, challenging targets to accelerate the rate of improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**