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19 March 2015

Mr T Melia  
Headteacher  
Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Primary School  
Hare Lane  
Langley Green  
Crawley  
RH11 7PZ

Dear Mr Melia

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Primary School, Crawley**

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 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:

- sharpen and clarify objectives within the school's strategic plan, so that it is easier to check how successful the related actions are
- improve further governors' questioning of senior staff, so that the answers required are more illuminating with, as appropriate, more evaluative comments.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior staff. We toured the school together, making short visits to lessons in all year groups. I talked to pupils and looked at some of their work. I also met with members of the governing body and

spoke with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated documents, including the school's action plan, minutes of meetings and data showing the pupils' progress.

## **Main findings**

The school is better than it was a year ago. You have worked successfully, with good humour, at setting a clearer direction. You have improved the management systems needed to reach the goals you set.

The school's strategic plan is now well-focused, easily understandable and succinct. It deals ambitiously with the areas most needing improvement. It is a successful working document. However, in a few cases, we agreed that some of the objectives the plan contains are not clear enough. They say what will be done rather than what will be achieved as a result. This makes it harder to check the success of the work that goes into these parts of the plan.

You have clear evidence that pupils' progress and attainment are becoming better. The 2014 national test results, at all stages and subjects, showed improvement and were above national averages. It is particularly pleasing to see the advancements in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, almost all pupils made the expected progress. We agree that more pupils could aim to make more than expected progress. Your data indicates that this is beginning to happen. The quality of pupils' writing we looked at in Years 2 and 6 was generally of a high standard. Pupils wrote with interest, applying grammar and spelling rules suitably. We noted too that some pupils in Year 6 did not always write as neatly as they should. In a few cases, their letters were inaccurately formed.

No groups of pupils underachieve. The gap between the performance of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding, for example, and their classmates is generally small and, sometimes, non-existent. Pupils who speak English as an additional language mainly achieve well. However, they often struggle to achieve the very highest levels in the assessments in Key Stage 1, including the phonics screening test. (This checks pupils' ability to link letters and sounds.)

Rightly, you are committed to making these improvements sustainable, and less subject to year-on-year fluctuation. You have evidence of how the school is becoming more secure and consistent in its work. For example, year groups plan very closely together so that pupils have worthwhile learning tasks. We saw lower junior pupils enjoying interesting and challenging work involving alliteration and *The Iron Man*. Older juniors all wrote to Queen Victoria. In this task, they improved their historical and literacy learning very usefully.

When we visited lessons, we saw that pupils in all year groups were fully involved in their learning. This is as a result of improved teaching and their positive behaviour. Pupils were keen and confident to discuss and explain their work. In some cases, pupils decide for themselves the level of difficulty of the task they will do. This has

the effect of helping them to be successful at tackling demanding work. Reception pupils made sound choices about their activities. They enjoyed going through, under and over physical education apparatus independently and safely. It was good to hear of the improvements planned to the early years environment, although the existing classrooms and outdoor spaces are well-organised. Across the whole school, classrooms are attractive and stimulating places for pupils to learn.

Pupils participate in a wide range of activities, including sport and the arts. I was pleased to see the increase in musical opportunities. The curriculum is broad. Leaders of each subject are developing their work helpfully. Pupils enjoy taking real responsibility as play leaders, peer mediators and school councillors.

Leadership and management continue to improve. Your inclusive style encourages people to work together towards shared goals. You are supported effectively by senior staff. The arrangements for managing the performance of staff are appropriate. We discussed how these might evolve if the school increases in size and you have well-considered plans for this.

Following the review of its work last year, the suitably organised and better trained governing body is having greater impact. Governors visit the school regularly. They record and discuss these visits productively. This helps them to make their strategic decisions with valuable first-hand knowledge. However, many of the questions governors ask of senior staff in meetings elicit mainly factual answers when it would be useful for governors to know more about how well the issue under discussion is going. For example, the question, 'How do we follow up persistent absence?' might usefully be reworded, 'How effectively do we follow up persistent absence?'

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 provides a range of helpful support to the school, at your request. It evaluates the school's progress accurately.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Director of Schools for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**