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29 March 2007

Mrs M Gee  
The Headteacher  
Keyham Barton Catholic Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Gee

#### OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff, chair of governors and pupils gave when I inspected your school on 16 March 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 6 March 2006 the school was asked:

- to improve its monitoring and evaluation procedures
- to give pupils clearer guidance about how to improve their work
- to improve the range of active and independent learning activities in the Reception class.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

Each key issue is addressed in detail below.

- Improve monitoring and evaluation procedures.

The school has benefited from the support of the local authority (LA) to produce a well structured outline plan to make its monitoring and evaluation procedures more rigorous. However, whilst this useful plan is being soundly implemented, improvement initiatives are not always informed by the wealth of data that the school now collects. As a result, monitoring and evaluation

activities are sometimes too general and opportunities are missed to focus on the progress of particular groups of pupils. For example, the 2006 test results in Year 6 show the need to raise the overall achievement of boys, and also of the most able pupils in English and science, neither of which has been specifically addressed.

The senior management team is committed to raising standards through more effective monitoring and evaluation, and has been strengthened by the inclusion of the English and mathematics coordinators. The whole team has received well focused training from the LA to improve their skills in observing lessons. In addition, the headteacher has carried out joint observations with senior staff to validate and moderate their judgements. This has improved their confidence and ability to make secure judgements, enabling them to give useful feedback to teachers on their strengths and areas for development. As a result, improvements have been made in teaching and learning. However, lesson observations are sometimes too focused on describing the activities seen rather than evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

In addition to lesson observations, the coordinators for English and mathematics analyse planning and pupils' work, talk with pupils, and provide support for particular teachers. The rigour of these monitoring activities is satisfactory but it would be strengthened by linking them more closely to the achievement of specific groups of pupils. Teachers' planning has improved and good practice is beginning to be disseminated. Discussions with teachers show they value the increased monitoring and feedback, and that self-evaluation is now becoming securely embedded as part of the school's culture. The school no longer overestimates its effectiveness, following the improvements in its monitoring and evaluation procedures.

- Give pupils clearer guidance about how to improve their work.

The school has worked effectively to improve the process for setting targets for pupils. All classrooms display clearly defined expectations for English and mathematics and pupils know where they are on the continuum. As a result, pupils generally know their individual targets, what they have to do to improve their work, and how well they are achieving. Pupils are keen to improve and believe their targets help them to make progress. The quality of teachers' marking has improved and there are examples of well focused feedback to pupils. However, there are still inconsistencies. For example, the most capable pupils are often praised but receive too little guidance about how to do even better.

- Improve the range of active and independent learning activities in the Reception class.

Improvements to provision in the Reception class are impressive. The enthusiastic Reception teacher has reviewed and improved the curriculum so that it now matches children's needs more accurately and reflects national guidance. As a result, children now have a good range of opportunities to work and play independently, make decisions, and learn through a variety of practical activities. In the lesson observed during my visit, the class was a hive of purposeful activity and children were clearly well motivated and actively involved in their learning.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

David Westall  
Additional Inspector