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28 November 2007

Miss Donna McNicoll
Headteacher
St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School
Lime Road
Haslingden
Rossendale
Lancashire
BB4 5NP

Dear Miss McNicoll

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help that you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please thank all the pupils and teachers who were so happy to talk to me and to show me the work of the school.

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 in June 2006, the school was asked to:

- Implement a consistent approach to teaching all aspects of writing and so raise standards.
- Ensure assessment information is used effectively to target and challenge all pupils, especially the more able.
- Develop monitoring procedures so that managers at all levels have a thorough understanding of achievement and standards and are able to evaluate the effect of changes in standards.
- Increase resources for ICT.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making outstanding progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The school's results in the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds show that standards reached by the end of Year 6 were above average and pupils achieved well.

Standards have risen significantly for all pupils. The use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and other inspection evidence shows that all pupils have made good progress in writing. Teaching is consistently good with examples of outstanding teaching. Teaching across the school is innovative, exciting and challenging so that pupils learn with enthusiasm and pleasure and make rapid progress.

Assessment procedures are good across the school and pupils in every class understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given the opportunity to initiate their own learning, assess their own work and that of their classmates and thus become strong, independent learners. Teachers use the data collected from assessment to plan lessons which are extremely well-matched to the needs of each individual pupil and to set challenging targets. Effective challenge is provided for able, gifted and talented pupils who are identified at an early stage. Equally there is strong support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to learning English.

Since the time of the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and there has been a complete change of all the staff working in school. The new team is dynamic, enthusiastic and extremely well led by the headteacher. Both the headteacher and the leading teacher provide excellent role models for more recently qualified teachers. All teachers take responsibility for leading in different subjects and for monitoring the standards, achievement and provision. School self-evaluation is a strength and the school is rigorous in tracking the progress of every pupil, identifying where intervention strategies are needed and taking appropriate action. All aspects of the school's work are subject to the same rigorous scrutiny and evaluation.

There has been significant investment in ICT and the school is well resourced and led by an experienced coordinator. Schemes of work are in place for every year group and all pupils' work is assessed termly.

After the last inspection the new senior leaders put together a highly successful and detailed action plan which has addressed all the issues raised and allowed the school to move forward in a number of other areas. Facilities have been overhauled and improved both indoors and out to create a stimulating and exciting learning environment. The school is popular with parents and the number of pupils on roll is steadily increasing.

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

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw
Additional Inspector