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Mr G Mapp
The Headteacher
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Chapmans Lane
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Dear Mr Mapp

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 July 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please could you also pass on my thanks to children I spoke to as well as the staff who gave so freely of their time as did your chair of governors?

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 28 and 29 June 2007, the school was asked to:

- monitor more regularly the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that pupils are making
- ensure that all teachers have high expectations of the amount of work that pupils are capable of doing in lessons and that work is more closely matched to ability, particularly for the more able
- provide more structured opportunities for pupils to build steadily on their writing skills.

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

Standards overall improved in 2007 and pupils made satisfactory and improving progress. In Year 2, standards were above average in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were in line with national expectations; this represented a decrease in line with a 3 year declining trend. Information provided by the school indicates that for 2008 standards in writing are improving and the trend is being

reversed. In Year 6, standards improved in English, mathematics and science and were all above national average.

My visits to a sample of lessons confirmed that the quality of teaching is good. This confirms the school's own judgment that teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' planning to meet pupils' differing learning needs is much improved. The range of tasks used in lessons is well matched to the pupils' abilities and gives appropriate support to the less able, as well as challenge for the more able pupils. Meticulous planning in some classes extends to designing innovative classroom surroundings that provide a comfortable and encouraging learning environment, especially for the younger pupils.

Teaching continues to be characterised by very good relationships in lessons where pupils and teachers are comfortable in each others' company. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to take a full part in all the activities. They work well together especially where group work sessions allow them to help each other out. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils like the facilities the school provides – especially the new outdoor equipment!

Effective tracking strategies now allow the progress pupils are making to be more closely monitored so that underachievement can be easily and quickly identified. Teachers use information from the tracking along with other assessment strategies very flexibly to set realistic targets that maintain a level of challenge appropriate to individual pupils and to plan appropriate lessons.

The leadership of the school has made a considered and thoughtful response to the issues raised in the previous inspection. Prioritising the monitoring of pupil performance has strengthened the role of target setting in raising achievement. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has not been such a high priority and there is still some way to go in putting into place agreed evaluation strategies that will be effective in improving classroom practice and further raising standards.

Following the inspection, staff carried out a thorough audit of pupils' writing and identified specific areas where improvements were needed. There is now a much clearer progression in the development of writing skills across the school with many more opportunities for writing to be developed through other subjects. Good use is made of moderation and agreement trials to ensure all teachers have the same understanding and expectations of the standard and level of pupils' written work.

The School Improvement Partner has offered informal advice and support which has been useful in helping the school to respond to the inspection issues.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector