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Mrs Claire Murphy
Acting Headteacher
Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School
Dunley Drive
New Addington
Croydon
CRO ORG

Dear Mrs Murphy

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and pupils gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 17 September 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the chair of governors, colleagues from the local authority (LA) and the diocese for the time they gave.

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 January 2008, the school was asked to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, improve the quality of teaching, improve marking, strengthen the role of subject leaders and work with parents to improve pupils' punctuality.

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

The school has experienced large scale staffing turnover and most of the teaching staff, including the acting headteacher, have only been in the school since the beginning of this month. They are working well together and have created a positive atmosphere and pleasant learning environment.

Improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have resulted in a rise in standards in these age groups. Progress in the older classes has been much slower and the, as yet invalidated, end of Key Stage 2 assessment tests show a further decline in standards. Assessment records, lessons and pupils' books show a similarly mixed picture. Younger pupils are beginning to make better progress. The

use of targeted small group work has had some positive impact, with small but growing numbers of pupils achieving accelerated progress. However, the standards achieved by the majority of pupils as they move through the school are too low. With good support from the LA, the school now has better organised information about pupil attainment on which to base more accurate target setting and progress reviews.

The quality of teaching and learning in the younger age groups is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In these lessons pupils are encouraged to be actively involved and to enjoy their learning and, as a result, make good progress. In Key Stage 2 the quality is more erratic and sometimes inadequate. Across the school lessons are generally well organised with most teachers trying to make sure that activities match the needs of different groups. Teaching assistants provide good support, especially when they have clear guidance. Relationships and behaviour are at least satisfactory. Too often though, particularly in the older classes, the pace of learning is slow, activities mundane and the purpose of tasks not clearly understood. The main barrier to improvement is the generally low expectations regarding the quality and quantity of work which pupils can and should be achieving.

All teachers mark the pupils' work conscientiously, and some give guidance and identify the next steps for learning. However, there is less evidence of pupils being given opportunities to act on this. In some classes poor presentation is accepted and key vocabulary misspelt and uncorrected.

There is greater clarity about subject leaders' roles and responsibilities however staff changes have affected progress in this area. All bar two of the senior and middle leaders are new to the school and all except one new to their leadership role. They have made a good start, but it is very early days and it will take time to be able to measure the impact of these changes.

Improving punctuality is an area of good news. Changes in routines have resulted in many more pupils arriving on time every day.

The LA and the local Catholic school group are providing appropriate support and this is particularly evident in enabling a local deputy head to become acting headteacher at short notice. There were delays in integrating support plans with the school's own action plan and insufficient rigour early on in tackling the key barriers to improvement. The LA and school leaders share a very clear understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses and now must act urgently to tackle the inadequacies in teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector