

29 January 2009

Mrs L Wigglesworth
Headteacher
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Wigglesworth

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 January 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to all your staff, the Chair of Governors and pupils for their helpful contributions to the inspection.

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 17 and 18 June 2008 the school was asked to:

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school, particularly for more able pupils
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, eradicating inadequate teaching
- Improve the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage so that children make at least satisfactory progress in their learning
- Improve the quality of the curriculum so that pupils can build on their prior learning more effectively.

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 and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the last inspection, school leaders have stabilised staffing in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1. Permanent teachers have been appointed to the Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. The teachers appointed to

Years 1 and 2 are newly qualified. There is a full-time vacancy in Key Stage 2 which is being filled by a temporary teacher for two terms until recruitment to a Deputy headteacher post. The senior leadership team is also being strengthened by the appointment of key stage leaders.

Under the dynamic and forward-looking leadership of the headteacher the school is developing an ethos of high aspiration and success for all pupils. Her resolute focus on providing the best education is shared by governors and staff. The school has worked closely with the local authority to formulate an effective action plan to tackle weaknesses. Actions are already improving the quality of provision and raising pupils' achievement in lessons. They are beginning to have a positive impact on overall standards.

The school's 2008 provisional results for the end of Year 6 national tests showed good improvement in English and a considerable increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in all subjects. Standards in the current Year 6 class indicate that the school is on track to meet the targets set for 2009. This represents at least satisfactory progress by the majority of pupils. Standards attained in end of Year 2 assessments improved in writing but declined in reading and mathematics. This is largely due to a legacy of low achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Improved teaching is raising achievement in the current Key Stage 1 classes and the school is on track to achieve the targets set for 2009.

Lesson sampling confirmed the school's monitoring which shows that the proportion of good teaching has increased. The stabilisation of staffing and the varied and interesting teaching in the EYFS and at Key Stage 1 have greatly enhanced pupils' learning. The new, flexible Year 1 curriculum enables pupils who need to continue working towards the EYFS learning goals to do so. At the same time, the needs of the more able pupils are being well met within both the Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

However, there is still inadequate teaching in some classes at Key Stage 2, particularly in respect of progressing the knowledge and skills of the more able pupils. Leaders are taking robust action to tackle the weaker aspects. Good professional development, through training and feedback following lesson observations, is helping staff to develop their expertise. There is also some outstanding practice within the school, in Year 6 for example, which provides a good model for effective teaching. In the best lessons, learning objectives and success criteria are well understood by pupils. They are fully engaged in the tasks and enjoy every moment of the lesson. Opportunities for pupils to reinforce and extend their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are now in evidence across the school.

The effectiveness of the EYFS is much improved. The recently appointed practitioners, improved resources and the focus on personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills have been successful

in ensuring that all children are now making at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Through good quality assessment, practitioners are ensuring that activities are well matched to children's interests and learning needs. The curriculum is well balanced with a range of directed and independent learning opportunities which are well planned to extend children's skills and understanding. Children play harmoniously together and enjoy each other's company.

Alongside improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching, there has been a whole school focus on pupil progress tracking, assessment and target setting. Teachers are involved in the analysis of, and are accountable for, the progress made by pupils in their class. Pupils have a good understanding of the newly introduced marking system and know their learning targets and improvement points.

Children's personal development and well-being are promoted well both in the EYFS and across the whole school. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. They are confident and well behaved. The increased opportunities to learn through visits and visitors to the school have done much to enrich pupils' experience. They showed their presentation on synagogues and the Jewish culture with pride and were most enthusiastic about the recent 'Doors to the Future' event in which they learned about a range of professions from visitors.

School leaders, including governors, are well aware of relative strengths and weaknesses. All show a strong commitment to improvement. As the Chair of Governors said, 'These children deserve the best and that's where we're going!' Given the strong drive and commitment of the headteacher, the impact of actions already taken, the strengthening of expertise on the staff and the proposals to strengthen leadership further, the school is well placed to achieve this goal.

The local authority is providing good support to develop capacity through the provision of professional development and support from the link adviser in monitoring progress. The diocesan advisers have also supported the school well in making necessary improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector