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8 July 2009

Mr O P Folkes  
Headteacher  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School  
Griffin Road  
Plumstead  
London  
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Dear Mr Folkes

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 1 July 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 the governors, the local authority representative and those pupils who spoke to me about the school.

As a result of the inspection on 26 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that the school complies fully with current government requirements for safeguarding
- improve the level of challenge for pupils of all abilities so that they achieve as well as they can
- ensure that the teaching of writing is consistently good across the school, so that pupils become increasingly effective and independent writers.

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' achievements. The local authority has worked closely with the school, providing a good level of support, including help from specialist staff, funding, rigorous evaluation of the school's work and challenge to improve further.

Inspection and school evidence indicate an improvement in standards across the school. The 2009 unvalidated national test data for the current Year 6 suggest significant improvements in English and mathematics. The school's focus on writing has been particularly beneficial and the disparity between reading and writing has narrowed. Standards are now above the national average; the majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress, and many are making good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are doing particularly well, but progress is slower in other year groups. This is because the legacy of weak teaching is still having an impact on the rate of pupils' progress. The school has developed more rigorous procedures for tracking the progress pupils make. For example, tracking grids are used to inform



decisions regarding intervention groups and to address underachievement in specific areas. This has contributed to additional support being targeted more effectively so that pupils are beginning to make better progress throughout the school.

Monitoring of teaching by the school and the local authority indicates that all teaching is now at least satisfactory or better, and is improving. There is a steadily growing proportion of good lessons. The focus is now firmly on how to promote learning through independent thinking and practical activities that engage and motivate pupils. In the lessons observed, teachers have clearly taken on board the new initiatives introduced by the school. The most significant improvement is that they have higher expectations of pupils, particularly in their acquisition and use of vocabulary. Pupils are finding the lessons more interesting and they enjoy the activities. The more focused teaching is starting to have a positive impact on progress. Good questioning linked to the learning objectives, and a practical and interactive teaching approach, support the good pace of learning in the better lessons. Teaching assistants provide pupils with good support. The development of clear systems for monitoring pupils' progress, together with well-focused support to meet the needs of all pupils, has had a significant positive impact on pupils' progress. However, senior leaders acknowledge that there is still some way to go before every pupil is making consistently good progress throughout the school.

Senior leaders have readily taken on the challenge of tackling the root causes of underachievement. They meet with teachers each term to review each pupil's progress, ensuring that early signs of underachievement are dealt with promptly. Academic guidance is steadily improving but recent initiatives have not yet become fully embedded in everyday practice. For example, some pupils know and use their learning targets, while others are unclear about them. Good-quality input from local authority consultants is having a positive impact on improving key aspects of the school's provision. This is sensibly delivered to take account of improvements made and to address remaining areas of weakness. Regular meetings provide a helpful review of the school's progress and identify emerging issues.

Safeguarding arrangements now comply fully with government requirements. Governors and staff have received appropriate training; the health and safety policy and risk assessment procedures have been updated; and regular health and safety checks, involving the local authority and governors, are now carried out.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria  
Her Majesty's Inspector