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Mrs Julia Christy  
Headteacher  
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School  
Stonesby Avenue  
Leicester  
LE2 6TY

Dear Mrs Christy

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 December and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Discussions with the chair and vice chair of governors, the teacher with responsibility for literacy and numeracy, pupils and a representative from the local authority were also very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made.

Since the previous inspection, the school has enjoyed a greater degree of staff stability than in previous years. Both of the newly qualified teachers who joined last year have stayed at the school this year.

As a result of the inspection on 30-31 October 2008, the school was asked to raise the achievement of more able pupils in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 1 and 2, create manageable systems for accurately assessing pupils' progress that result in challenging targets and more pupils achieving well, and to ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to use and apply their basic skills in numeracy and literacy.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2009 showed that pupils' attainment improved compared with the previous year in reading, writing and mathematics. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment fell in 2009 compared with the previous year. However, this group contained fewer high fliers and the progress they made in Years 3 to 6 was in line with that from previous years. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in the national tests followed the same pattern, an increase in Key Stage 1 and a decrease in Key Stage 2. The weakest area is writing, particularly that of boys. The standards reached by

girls was significantly higher than by boys in the 2009 tests. Attendance has been below national averages, with a higher than average proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. The school's efforts to improve attendance are proving to be successful and it is currently above average.

In order to improve pupils' writing, preliminary work has been carried out on accelerating the development of the skills of reading and of speaking. This has included individual support for some pupils. In addition, there has been a greater focus on writing, for example through the development of topic work. However, the use of extended writing in science, for example, is underdeveloped. The school's tracking data shows that for this term there has been above average progress in reading, as well as in numeracy. Progress in writing too is above average, though less so than for the other subjects. A scrutiny of pupils' work confirms the clear improvement this term. For example, there is greater accuracy of punctuation and grammar, with improved vocabulary and fluency of writing. Some teachers' marking of pupils' work is of excellent quality with very clear and specific suggestions for areas for pupils to improve upon, for example which connectives to begin to use. While the quality of handwriting is improving, with letters being better shaped and positioned, the development of joined writing is left too late. Pupils enjoy science; however, the development of their science skills is uneven. In some of the investigational work pupils are asked to do, there is a lack of clarity in the objectives, for example about what aspect of scientific planning pupils are supposed to be developing.

The school's leaders have taken steps to improve the accuracy of the assessments of pupils' work and have developed a clear method of formally tracking the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. Termly assessments are now carried out. A scrutiny of the data reveals that in most cases the higher attaining pupils are making the progress they should be. This is true of both girls and boys. Progress is strongest in Years 5 and 6. The school's leaders now monitor pupils' work, teachers' planning and observe lessons with greater frequency and there are more regular checks on pupils' progress. This has led to support being given to strengthen teaching where required, with some early indications of success. The school's targets are very challenging and there is still much to be done if they are to be achieved. Nevertheless, progress is satisfactory.

The local authority has provided satisfactory support to the school.

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

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector