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Mrs Angela Phillips
Headteacher
St Cuthbert and the First Martyrs RC Primary School
Scotchman Road
Manningham
Bradford
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BD9 5AT

Dear Mrs Phillips

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 October 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils for taking the time to talk to me about the school.

Since the time of the last inspection a new permanent deputy headteacher and three other staff have joined the school and two staff have left. The school has also undergone significant refurbishment and remodelling work to improve facilities and enhance the quality of the learning environment.

As a result of the inspection on 25 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve the quality and consistency of teaching in lessons
- provide pupils with clearer guidance on what they are expected to achieve and how to meet these expectations
- to increase the contribution made by senior staff to strategic leadership and management

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

Attainment at Key Stage 1 has continued to improve and the school's most recent data indicates that standards have risen to slightly above average overall from being significantly below average in 2007. At Key Stage 2 significantly above average



attainment has been sustained although unvalidated test results for 2009 show a decline in the number of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in writing. The school's data shows and pupils in all classes are now making at least satisfactory progress and the large majority are making good progress because the quality of teaching is of a consistently better quality than at the time of the last inspection.

Improvement has been rapid over the three terms since the last inspection with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher successfully bringing about improvements in teaching and learning, guidance for pupils and increasing the effectiveness of other senior leaders. The profile of teaching quality has improved with more teaching that is now good. Observations carried out during this inspection support this judgement. This has been achieved through well chosen new appointments, increased accountability for teachers with regard pupils' progress, rigorous monitoring of teaching effectiveness and the use of a good range of professional development activities well matched to the needs of individual staff members. Consequently the wide variation in teaching quality seen at the last inspection has been reduced and pupils are making consistently better progress because staff expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher and work is matched more closely to their individual learning needs. Pupils confirm the improvements to lessons saying that teachers are using a wider range of activities that are more engaging and make their learning fun.

A whole school approach to ensuring pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve and what they have to do to meet these expectations has been introduced. All teachers share lesson objectives so pupils are aware of their intended learning and most teachers are referring to outcomes during lessons to confirm pupils' progress. Marking and written feedback is more informative, confirming for pupils what they have done well and explaining next steps on how to improve. Pupils are very positive about the new approach and are increasingly responding to teacher prompts requiring them to demonstrate or extend their learning. Individual target books have also been introduced and these are involving students in assessing their own progress more regularly in relation to meeting a particular target. While there is evidence of much good or better assessment practice some further embedding is still required.

There has been a significant improvement in the contribution of senior staff to the strategic leadership and management of the school. They are now contributing more effectively to the school's increased capacity for sustained improvement. The roles, responsibilities and expectations of senior staff have been clarified and individuals have received good support to enable them to develop their leadership and management skills. Paired observations involving senior staff, the school improvement officer or the headteacher combined with other monitoring activities have increased leaders' understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their respective curriculum areas. As a result they are better placed to lead improvement. Leaders present termly summaries of their work so all staff have a clear picture of recent subject developments and understand the actions required to

further improve provision. In addition, the rolling programme of curriculum review presentations by senior leaders to the governing body is helping to increase governor's working knowledge of the school. Senior leaders are also making a more effective contribution to the professional development of other staff through coaching, mentoring, modelling good practice and leading whole staff training sessions.

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

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector