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Mrs Helen Knight  
Headteacher  
Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School and Language College  
Potters Green Road  
Coventry  
CV2 2AJ

Dear Mrs Knight

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave us when we inspected your school on 26 January 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussion, for the opportunity to prepare for the inspection in school and for the information which you provided during our visit. Please also thank the staff and the pupils for their warm and friendly welcome.

A number of changes have taken place at the school recently. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those for whom English is an additional language, has increased since the previous inspection and is now above average. The school is part of a federation. Initially set up to enhance sixth form provision, the federation is playing an increasingly important part in the provision for pupils in Key Stage 4. In November 2009, the science laboratories were burnt down. Science is currently taught in temporary classrooms. Since the previous inspection, the school has achieved the International Schools Award and two Sustainable Schools Award, one at local and one at national level.

As a result of the inspection on 30-31 January 2008, the school was asked to

- raise standards further in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 9 and increase the proportion of pupils who attain five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics
- increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better
- ensure there is greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that they know how to improve

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.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in Year 9 has risen. It is now broadly in line with that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils who attain five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics in Year 11 has also increased, bringing it up to the national average in 2009. While achievement is still only satisfactory, it is improving rapidly because pupils' learning and progress are now good and they very much enjoy their lessons. The proportion of teaching that is good or better has risen significantly, greatly contributing to these improvements. Teachers' marking has improved considerably in different subjects although it is still not yet entirely consistent across the school.

Several key factors have contributed to the above improvements, significantly strengthening the school's good capacity for further, sustained improvement. Senior leaders and managers, working with the local authority and other agencies, have successfully focused teaching on improving learning and they keep both under close scrutiny. Targets for the end of Key Stage 4 are challenging and staff are committed to reaching them. The school rigorously assesses and tracks pupils' progress and timely interventions ensure that everything possible is done to keep pupils' learning on track. Changes in the curriculum in both key stages mean that it meets the needs and interests of its pupils better, raising their self-esteem and showing them that they can succeed. Pupils recognise this, explaining how the wider range of courses, the different ways in which teachers teach them, and the improved marking of their work have all improved their progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which are linked closely to National Curriculum levels and to outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4. First hand practical activities engage pupils well in learning from the minute they walk into the classroom, and teachers know just when to draw pupils together to share and extend their learning. Where teaching is only satisfactory, it is usually because the work given to more able pupils is not challenging enough, or learning is too teacher-led and does not involve pupils sufficiently.

The school uses its specialist status as a language college well. Pupils' attainment in full and short language courses is significantly above the national average. Pupils recognise what they call the 'long term benefits' of learning a different language and the implications it could have for their future. The school's specialist status contributes greatly to the promotion of community cohesion at all levels. In this, it uses to its advantage the increased proportion of pupils from different cultures and its links with schools abroad.

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

Doris Bell  
Additional Inspector

