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Mrs J Riglar
Headteacher
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
Tile Barn Close
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Dear Mrs Riglar

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 March 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit. I would be grateful if you would also pass my thanks on to the staff, pupils and governors for the warmth of their welcome and the significant part they played in the inspection visit.

I note that since the last inspection a number of staff changes have taken place including the appointment of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and some class teachers.

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

- improve pupils' progress in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2
- ensure lesson plans set out clearly what each ability group is expected to learn.

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.



Overall pupils' attainment in the national tests was low in 2008 and improved to broadly average in 2009. Progress in mathematics is now satisfactory and in science it is starting to improve. The school recognises that as well as making changes in these two areas there is also a need to focus on the progress that pupils make in writing. As a result of the intervention in all three subjects there is clear evidence that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate. The quality of learning in lessons is improving, stemming from various changes to provision and a greater emphasis on monitoring and staff development.

Although teaching and learning remain satisfactory overall, there are clear indicators that these aspects have improved since the last inspection. Where learning is strongest, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and questioning is used to good effect to develop pupils' understanding of new concepts. Lesson plans are very detailed and clearly identify the needs of groups and individuals; consequently the work set for pupils ensures that they make good progress. Where learning is satisfactory, planning does not always accurately identify the needs of the most able pupils, with a consequent effect on progress.

When marking in books is at its strongest, it provides pupils with clear guidance about their next steps to learning. However this good practice is not yet consistent across subjects or year groups. In English and mathematics pupils are aware of their targets and are able to talk about them with confidence; as one child stated, 'Targets help me to improve my work.'

Since the last inspection the managers in English, mathematics and science have attended a number of courses and worked alongside consultants to further develop their expertise in each subject area. As a result of this intensive training, significant improvements have taken place. Each subject is now monitored by 'phase teams'. Each team regularly engages in lesson observations, peer teaching and the monitoring of books. Planning has been reviewed and there is now a better match to the needs of pupils within different year groups. Mathematics and English are no longer taught in sets and new methods of assessment have been introduced. The positive impact of recent improvements in guided writing is evident in pupils' books and the internal tracking documents. The science curriculum has been developed so that it is more practical and engaging for pupils. The greater emphasis on speaking and listening and the introduction of 'TASC wheels' has proved valuable in developing pupils' scientific thinking.

The new deputy headteacher has worked hard to develop a sound system for tracking pupils' progress. It provides the school with precise information about individual pupils. As a result of this, it is clear that pupils are beginning to make better progress, although this is inconsistent across subjects and year groups, and particularly so in science. The school is now considering how to refine this system so



that it can better target underachieving pupils and gain a clearer picture of overall pupil progress.

Since the last inspection the new headteacher has developed a team approach to bring about change. She is passionate about improving provision within the school so that pupils begin to make consistent progress. The school development plan is detailed and clearly identifies the areas for improvement, but is not always specific enough to support the school in identifying the impact of interventions. As a result of all the changes since the last inspection, pupils' achievement is beginning to accelerate. Together, these improvements and the commitment of all staff to meet these challenges indicate that the school has made satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity to make further improvements.

The local authority has provided good support to the school through using consultants to develop the curriculum and staff expertise. This has had a positive impact on pupil outcomes. The local authority and school are keen to continue this support to further improve pupils' achievement.

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

Susan Gadd
Her Majesty's Inspector

