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Mr Gerard Keane
Headteacher
St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School
Blackburn Road
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Lancashire
BB3 0AA

Dear Mr Keane

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 May 2010, for the time you gave to the preparation at your school on 10 May 2010 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and governors for talking to me.

Since the last inspection there have been a number of significant staff changes, resulting in a new headteacher, an acting deputy headteacher and teaching staff being appointed. In addition, the school has managed several maternity leaves and the organisation of staff due to the reduction in the school's admission number. The school is in the midst of building work.

As a result of the inspection on 22-23 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- make rigorous use of available information to identify and tackle any underachievement promptly
- raise standards in Key Stage 2 by giving clearer guidance to individual pupils to help them to improve
- provide greater challenge in lessons in Years 1 to 6 for more-able pupils so that they make swifter progress.

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.



Pupils' achievement is improving and their progress is becoming more even across the school. These improvements to pupils' progress are based on a sharper monitoring of teaching and learning and better use of the findings to develop practice and assessment systems further. The school has adopted a more rigorous approach to monitoring and recording pupils' progress. There are now more regular opportunities to assess how well pupils are doing throughout the year so that any underachievement is picked up quicker. Evaluations are made of pupils' progress, with more timely interventions for any pupil who might be falling behind. The increased rigour in tracking pupils' progress is bringing greater accountability for the progress pupils make in each year group. Since the last inspection attainment has improved at the end of both key stages.

The marking of pupils' work is more informative and more consistent across year groups. Teachers give pupils constructive comments and useful targets to help them improve their work. Evidence from pupils' books shows how pupils are using their targets to improve the quality and content of their work. This is particularly evident in writing where attainment and progress are improving securely. Pupils confirm these positive improvements. In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their learning and teachers regularly remind pupils about their targets. For example, pupils make good use of their writing targets not just in literacy lessons but when writing in a range of subjects. This is contributing to their improving achievement. Pupils are encouraged to identify for themselves how to improve their work. There are examples where pupils are beginning to enter into a written dialogue with their teachers about their work. Parents and carers are more aware of their child's targets and able to contribute more to their learning.

Progress in lessons is showing consistent improvement. The quality of teaching is better and more consistent. Careful consideration has been given to the deployment of teaching staff to meet the needs of pupils' different abilities, including the more able and the different class sizes. Lessons are characterised by clear learning objectives as well as pupils' continued good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. Pupils say they enjoy learning and that lessons are more interesting because they now have better resources and equipment. They commented favourably on the new laptops and more opportunities to use them to support their learning in other subjects. Increasingly the more able pupils are challenged to improve their progress. In the lessons observed there were good examples where these pupils were encouraged to extend their thinking and apply their different skills to solve problems. Improvements to the way in which the curriculum is planned are giving pupils opportunities to extend their basic skills in other subjects. Evidence from pupils' books demonstrates that increasingly the work set matches pupils' different abilities.

The headteacher has led many successful changes in the relatively short period of time since his appointment. This rapid rate of improvement is underpinned by a more rigorous self-evaluation of the school. He has quickly made an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, a strong focus has been given to developing a more structured approach to teaching

reading and assessing pupils' levels of attainment. The actions taken are improving pupils' progress and bringing a greater enthusiasm for reading. In addition, a more rigorous approach to tracking pupils' attainment in mathematics is helping to identify any specific weaker areas in this subject, for example, in problem solving. The school improvement plan identifies the key priorities but at present it lacks sharpness in terms of measurable outcomes which restricts its use in evaluating the progress the school is making against its targets. Subject leaders are increasing their effectiveness in evaluating pupils' attainment and progress in the subjects for which they are responsible. Greater discussion and sharing of information is leading to improvements in the way the curriculum is planned and ensuring pupils' skills build systematically across the different subjects.

The headteacher is ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Together they communicate a clear vision for improvement. A track record of tackling weaknesses is developing as seen in pupils' improving progress. These features and improvements are building the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Brenda McIntosh
Additional Inspector