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16 June 2010

Mrs E Yates  
Headteacher  
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School  
St Teresa's Avenue  
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Dear Mrs Yates

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 June 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, parents and carers, the representative of the local authority and Chair of Governors with whom I met.

As a result of the inspection on 15 and 16 October 2009, the school was asked to raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 by improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning, by using assessment information to plan lessons to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and by ensuring that all teachers regularly monitor and record pupils' progress. The school was also asked to increase the effectiveness of the systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work so that swifter action is taken to tackle the most important weaknesses.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.



Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards and pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Data provided by the school and inspection evidence suggest that results in these subjects at the end of Year 6 are due to improve on last year's results. Inspection evidence also indicates that results in English will be higher than those in mathematics. Provisional results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 also indicate that there has been improvement in writing and in mathematics. Progress in lessons observed during the monitoring visit was satisfactory overall and in some classes pupils made good progress.

A contributing factor to these improvements is the greater use by teachers of the school's 'orange and green' system for marking pupils' work. This provides most pupils with a clearer picture of what they have achieved and of what to do next in order to improve. While there is much good practice in the use of this marking system, some inconsistencies remain and some work is unmarked. Pupils in Year 6 spoken to during the monitoring visit know the National Curriculum assessment levels they are working at and towards, but this is not yet the case with other pupils in Key Stage 2.

Good steps have been taken to improve the accuracy of assessments made by teachers. Training has been held on new assessment methods. The frequency with which pupils' performance is assessed by teachers in reading, writing and mathematics has been suitably increased. Teachers have been given greater responsibility for the collation and initial analysis of this information. This provides them and the school with a clearer picture of where underachievement lies. Teachers discuss this information with senior leaders at regular progress meetings. The format of these meetings has been changed to include additional relevant staff so that teachers can be held more to account and so that support for underachieving pupils can be readily organised. This information on pupils' progress satisfactorily informs teachers' planning so that in most lessons observed the level of work was matched to pupils' ability. However, in some lessons observed, pupils were asked to undertake work that was too difficult for them and assessment strategies, such as probing questioning, for checking how well they understood their tasks were not effectively used. In other lessons pupils were not fully challenged by their work, partly due to weaknesses in planning. Where pupils made good progress in their work, teachers explained tasks carefully and checked thoroughly that pupils had understood what they had to do. Pupils were given time to answer questions and explain their thinking. Expectations of what pupils of different abilities could achieve were high, management of behaviour was good and pupils were kept focused on their work. Consequently, the pace of learning was fast.

The more regular analysis of pupils' progress and the resulting clearer picture of where underachievement lies inform a number of intervention strategies, such as a homework club, additional teachers working alongside older pupils and one-to-one tuition. New resources to improve pupils' phonic awareness have been purchased. There is also a greater use of additional adults who support pupils in class as well as small groups of pupils outside of the classroom. On occasion, some additional adults



are not sufficiently well used to challenge pupils fully and to help check that pupils in lessons have understood their tasks.

With the support of the local authority, the level of monitoring of teaching and learning has increased. Suitable steps have been taken to monitor the quality of pupils' work and feedback on this is provided to teachers. Lesson observations have been undertaken in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics. However, the school's assessment of the proportion of teaching that is good or better is overgenerous. Not all weaknesses in teaching have been tackled swiftly or robustly enough. All teachers have a development plan which is aimed at improving their teaching but there is scope for this system to focus more sharply on weaknesses in teaching. A new planning format has been introduced and teachers' planning is monitored. However, there are some weaknesses in the school's oversight of planning, for example in ensuring that lessons taught by all temporary teachers are appropriately planned for.

The local authority's statement of action and its action plan have been suitably revised and are now fit for purpose. The local authority provides good support to the school and monitors its improvement. The local authority has allocated additional funding and its consultants have worked alongside the school's staff on developing a range of subjects and on improving planning. The local authority has facilitated a number of visits by the school's staff to other schools to study good practice, for example in how progress meetings can be improved. The local authority's Children's Services adviser, who is also the School Improvement Partner, is a regular visitor to the school and provides useful reports to the school. The school has also used an external consultant to check its assessments of teaching and learning in religious education.

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

Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector