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Mr V Burke
Headteacher
Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Primary School
Hare Lane
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West Sussex
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Dear Mr Burke

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 6 July 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 17 November 2009, the school was asked to:

- ensure pupils' achievement and attainment is at least satisfactory by June 2010 in English, mathematics and science, and that that all groups of learners achieve equally well by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to respond to teachers' marking comments by regularly editing and improving their work
 - increasing the opportunity for more able pupils to investigate challenging activities in mathematics and science
 - making sure that Year 1 pupils are sufficiently challenged
- strengthen the leadership still further by:
 - building on the work already started in the improvement plan so that middle managers are supported to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and share their own good teaching skills.

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 the pupils' achievement.

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school. Staffing has remained relatively stable. Those who were newly appointed in September 2009 or who took up additional leadership responsibilities have settled into their roles well. A new chair of governors was appointed in November 2009.

The provisional results of 2010 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that standards are rising and coming into line with national averages. The number of children achieving Levels 4 and 5 in English and mathematics increased considerably. A shift in the culture of the school underpins this improvement. There is now a shared commitment to, and accountability for, making sure that all pupils achieve good progress. Whilst there are still inconsistencies, systems for monitoring and evaluating the school are more robust and comprehensive. The analysis of performance data is carried out regularly and includes close scrutiny of the attainment of different groups of pupils. Leaders and governors are developing their skills in using information from monitoring and assessment strategically to drive improvement. Opportunities for moderation are helping teachers to make accurate assessments. Consequently, they have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and are more adept at tailoring learning to meet the needs of individuals. For example, more able pupils enjoy the increasingly stimulating activities in mathematics and science.

Lesson observations are carried out regularly. A good coaching programme has been developed. Teachers are more reflective and deepening their understanding of effective learning. Senior leaders are right in wanting to extend the programme across the school. Five parts of lessons were observed during the inspection. In three, pupils were making satisfactory progress and in two they were making good progress. In the latter, teachers were using their understanding of pupils' prior attainment to match learning to their needs successfully. They made good use of questioning to probe and consolidate pupils' understanding. A variety of well-sequenced activities challenged pupils, and clear success criteria supported them in evaluating the quality of their work. In the lessons where pupils were making slower progress, pace often slackened, inattention was not challenged quickly enough and opportunities to extend pupils' thinking were sometimes missed. Currently, Year 1 and Reception pupils work in mixed classes. These arrangements will change next term. Meantime, teachers are using group work competently to ensure that Year 1 pupils are appropriately challenged.

Pupils are responding to teachers' marking where it is clearly identifying areas for improvement. The best marking adhered to the school's policy closely and combined encouragement and pointers for improvement effectively. There is some variation in the quality of marking and approaches to setting pupils subject specific targets. Good practice in the setting of literacy targets is yet to be fully shared.

Restructuring and good external support have resulted in more cohesive leadership. Governors have pupils' progress and attainment at the centre of their agenda. They are better informed and asking the right questions. Middle managers are involved in monitoring and evaluation in a systematic way. They are developing expertise and are increasingly influential in securing improvement. They benefit from the allocation of regular leadership time, but opportunities for them to work collaboratively are limited.

The school gives very high priority to pupils' well-being and safety. The single central register of staffing checks is well maintained and meets all requirements.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. The consultant headteacher, funded by the authority, works closely with the headteacher and provides sharply focused challenge and support.

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

Jacqueline White
Her Majesty's Inspector