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Mrs Lorna White
St Anthony's Roman Catholic Primary School
Genoa Road
Anerley
London
SE20 8ES

Dear Mrs White

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 September 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to your pupils, staff and the local leader of education who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher has retired and the deputy has been promoted to acting headteacher. A non-teaching acting deputy headteacher has been appointed since September 2009. The school is now one-form entry with currently two classes in Year 2. Staffing has undergone considerable change, with two newly qualified teachers being appointed last year and one in September 2010. The school works in close partnership with a local primary school whose headteacher is a National Challenge local leader of education.

As a result of the inspection on 8–9 October 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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.

National test results dipped in 2009 and were significantly below those nationally in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, though still below average, improved in 2010. This represents satisfactory progress from pupils' below average starting points. Pupils' achievement in reading has been good because of the strong focus on well-planned guided reading for all classes. Their achievement in writing and mathematics has been satisfactory.



An externally commissioned behaviour audit was carried out last year and involved all members of the school community. Its findings were used to revise behaviour policy and procedures, supported by training for staff on positive reinforcement strategies. As a result, exclusions went down dramatically last year and behaviour has improved. Pupils' attendance however, remains below average in spite of the promotional strategies currently in place, such as the attendance cup, to improve it. The school is a warm and cohesive community. For example, a strong community atmosphere was created in the hall during singing assembly when all pupils and teachers enthusiastically sang 'If I were a butterfly'.

Although the quality of teaching remains satisfactory, there is greater consistency in the use of clear learning objectives and, in many cases, steps to success in lessons. There is greater use of talk partners and effective use of modelling by teachers and teaching assistants. Although teachers have better data available as a result of improved tracking systems, their planning does not always indicate that they have made the best use of these data to cater for the different groups and abilities in their class. Higher-attaining pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are now identified and tracked. Tracking data show they make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

The school's strong partnership with a local primary school, whose headteacher is a National Challenge local leader of education, has had a positive impact on developing teaching and leadership at all levels. For example, it has had a positive effect on raising the expectations of staff about what pupils are capable of achieving. Pairing teachers across the two schools and working on shared planning and professional development has boosted staff morale and improved leadership skills. As part of this, there is now a sharper focus on the use of assessment. Whole-school analysis is evaluated carefully and intervention for any pupils who are seen to be falling behind is organised increasingly effectively through the vehicle of the termly pupil progress reviews. Improved assessment has given the leadership team a clearer picture of progress, so that they can target those pupils who need help. There is still variability in how well these assessments are used in each class to ensure that work meets all abilities and needs, depending on the expertise of the teacher, but satisfactory progress is being made towards eliminating this.

The improved use of marking means that pupils are beginning to have a clearer idea of how they can improve. For example, a Year 3 pupil was able to explain that her next steps for improvement were 'to use more connectives and describing words in my writing'. However, pupils are less confident talking about their group targets and specific individual targets. In addition, not yet so well developed, is pupils' understanding of how these relate to National Curriculum levels. This is, rightly, part of the school's future development plans.

The leadership team has demonstrated its commitment to improving the school. It has set challenging targets for pupils and teachers and there is a whole-school



expectation that these will be achieved. Good use of expertise has been made by the acting headteacher in restructuring the layer of middle leadership. There are sound plans in place to involve them more closely in monitoring and evaluation. Funding has been secured from London Challenge to develop further the role of middle leaders. In addition, expertise from the local authority and the local leader of education has been used well to monitor improvements and to provide specialist help, for example in helping to define the most important areas for improvement. The developments that have taken place after a period of some turbulence, all indicate a school that is moving forward steadily.

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

Nasim Butt
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2009

- raise achievement by improving behaviour management and the quality of teaching so that all children and pupils, particularly higher attainers and those who speak English as an additional language, make more sustained progress
- improve the use of assessment, targets and marking in lessons so that pupils have a clearer idea of how to improve their learning and the quality of their work
- improve the rigour of monitoring and analysis so that leadership at all levels can develop a more sustained focus on school improvement.