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13 October 2011

The appropriate authority through the acting headteacher
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Eden Way
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS4 2TF

Dear Mrs Angstmann

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of Sacred Heart Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 12 October 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. I would be grateful if you pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Adviser and the pupils I spoke to. They were very helpful.

Since the last inspection the school has experienced some turbulence in staffing. The headteacher is currently absent from school. To cover her absence an acting headteacher has been appointed on an interim basis. A member of staff has been absent due to long-term illness and her post is being covered by a supply teacher. The school has also appointed five new teaching staff.

As a result of the inspection on Tuesday 11 May 2010, 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement. The effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is also inadequate.

Pupils' attainment remains very low and their learning and progress have not blossomed in the rapid and secure way envisaged in the last inspection report. There were some modest gains in outcomes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 2. In contrast, pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 6 fell even lower. The Year 6 pupils who took the national tests in 2011 made satisfactory progress in English when set against their very low starting points in Year 2. However, pupils' progress plummeted in mathematics and was inadequate.

September 2010



The school's latest tracking data show that pupils' current progress varies within year groups and across subjects, with some accelerated progress tempered by some very slow progress. Staff consider that pupils are unlikely to hit their end-of-year targets.

The school's behaviour policy aims to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour, promote respect and reduce the volume of incidents. Over the past year there have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions. The inspectors' scrutiny of the incident and accident books revealed that a small number of pupils had been injured by other pupils. Pupils also referred to 'disagreements' about football at lunchtime. During this inspection pupils' behaviour was mixed. At one end of the spectrum it was impeccable when evacuating the building because children baking in the Nursery had triggered the fire alarm. This contrasts with the disobedience and off-task behaviour witnessed in some lessons. Generally, pupils are compliant and do as they are instructed. Their behaviour has to be carefully managed by staff. It is not self-regulated, which is indicative of good or better behaviour. Attitudes to learning vary, so too, does staff adherence to behaviour management protocols. Some of these concerns were evident at the last inspection which indicates the school has not resolved them effectively.

The school knows it must sustain the current improvement in pupils' attendance, which fell below 94% last year.

On the whole, staff provide pupils with learning objectives and success criteria, are confident, have secure subject knowledge and build mostly positive relationships with pupils. However, the joint scrutiny of every class that the inspector and acting headteacher conducted concluded that the teaching observed was not good enough to narrow rapidly and securely the wide gaps that exist between pupils' attainment and national age-related expectations. A lack of pace, low expectations and low-level work, together with a lack of participation and engagement in their own learning because of teacher-dominated sessions are inhibiting pupils' learning and progress. This shows itself in the insecurity of pupils' knowledge and understanding of key skills and concepts. In addition, staff do not routinely reinforce high expectations in terms of the quality of pupils' handwriting, grammar and punctuation. Consequently, there are marked variations from page to page in some pupils' books. Assessment practice is generally sound and there is an increased awareness of the progress individual pupils are making. However, marking and feedback are inconsistent and at times generic. The exact steps pupils should take to improve further are not always highlighted precisely enough.

Leaders and managers recognise the difficulties the school faces. They have coherent development plans which they are rolling out. There is some monitoring and evaluation of the success of these strategies. However, in the final analysis it is clear that these strategies are neither consistently applied nor embedded. Furthermore, there are question marks about the leadership capacity throughout the school given the evident lack of impact. The school has also enlisted the support of a high-performing partner school to share best practice. Even so, it is evident that the

school is not improving fast or securely enough and in some aspects has faltered since the last inspection. Staff are not sufficiently held to account and monitoring and evaluation are not rigorous enough to ensure that everyone adheres to the agreed procedures and strategies for systematically improving the school's performance, raising expectations and improving the learning ethos. Middle leaders are not impacting effectively enough in raising pupils' achievement.

The school has caused the local authority concern for some time. It has been subject to enhanced and regular training, support and reviews to boost standards and the effectiveness of leadership and governance. However, this intervention has not delivered the improved performance necessary. As a result of extra training, acquiring new members with educational backgrounds and more sharply focused committees, the governing body is more informed and better equipped to challenge as well as support the school. Nevertheless, the impact of the governing body in driving improvement to date has been limited.

This monitoring inspection included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures which met current requirements, although certain aspects of good practice are not adopted, such as updating criminal record bureau checks of staff every three years.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - using assessment information more rigorously in order to plan work which is more closely matched to pupils' needs.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - spreading the best practice across the school
 - reducing the amount of 'teacher talk', enabling pupils to become more active in their learning
 - linking the marking of pupils' work more directly to their targets.

- Develop the role of middle leaders in raising achievement by:
 - encouraging them to be more robust in their monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through lesson observations and looking at pupils' work.