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30 June 2011

Mrs Sue Allen  
St Paul's Catholic Primary School  
Park Lane  
Cheshunt  
EN7 6LR

Dear Mrs Allen

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School**

Thank you for your cooperation, and the welcome extended, during the inspection of your school on 29 June 2011. I am grateful for the time you gave to our preparatory telephone discussions and for the information that you provided before and during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to your staff and pupils for their welcome, and their contributions.

As a result of the inspection on 20 October 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. There have been no significant changes to the school since that inspection.

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.

The achievement of pupils is improving. This improvement is significantly faster in some areas than in others. Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 last year was still broadly in line with national averages, which represented satisfactory progress for them and significantly better progress than was made by the previous cohort. They had made very good progress in English but achievement in mathematics remained disappointing. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010 was much better than in 2009. Currently, achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics is improving; the school's assessment records show the likelihood of a higher proportion of pupils achieving at Level 5 than previously. Provision in science is better and a wider range of work is undertaken by pupils, including more investigations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are currently developing their skills in mathematics, reading and writing but their attainment is slightly below national averages. There are signs that they are catching up, however. There are good improvements in pupils' writing across the school, and staff are seeking ways of securing the ground gained and obtaining further improvements.



Behaviour remains good, however, pupils tend to be willing but passive learners who do not ask enough questions to enable them to make better progress. Pupils continue to feel safe and secure in school, and feel that staff look after them well. Attendance has improved from 2009/10 and is currently satisfactory.

The school correctly gauges the overall quality of teaching as satisfactory still, but there is evidence of developments in practice across the school that have the capacity to drive up the achievement of pupils. All staff now have a sound understanding of what constitutes good teaching and there is better grasp of the role of assessment in steering progress. The school uses targets and tracks the progress of pupils in order to embed consistently higher expectations of pupils' achievement. Some pupils, including the more able, still feel that more could be expected of them sometimes. There are plans underway to include more fun, active number work and mathematics challenges in the life of the school.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has responded well to the issues identified at the last inspection. Staff working patterns in the Nursery and Reception classes have been changed to allow for mid-week joint working and planning sessions. This has resulted in more structured planning for directed teaching, more focused provision for child-initiated learning, and a better balance between the two. Better use is now made of observations of children's work to inform planned interventions to extend learning opportunities. These changes have resulted in improvements in children's skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas, including their performance in mathematical calculation and early writing skills. This is a significant development since the last inspection.

Development plans identify the school's priorities accurately and make good use of previous inspection findings to focus energy and resources. There are currently no key steps defined for any of the main priorities, which limits the capacity for continual monitoring of the impact of these plans. The governing body continues to be a good critical friend to the school and offers challenge as well as support. It has been actively involved, alongside senior staff, in the local authority's 'securing good' initiative, for example. There is no formal mechanism to monitor progress against the two main recommendations from the previous inspection at whole governing body level, however. Increasing the senior team with a newly appointed member of the staff last September gives a broader perspective to discussions. The school is currently working to secure a stronger role in monitoring for its middle leaders, and this involves a clearer approach to the use of data in holding staff to account.

Aspects of the school's administration underpinning safeguarding procedures were inadequate at the beginning of the visit. They were addressed satisfactorily by the end of the day. There is no evidence of governors being actively involved in assuring the quality of these systems.

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

Alan Taylor-Bennett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards by the end Year 6 from average to above average, particularly in writing and science, by:
  - using assessment information more consistently to plan teaching and match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
  - providing challenging extension tasks for the more able
  - providing regular opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out practical investigations in science
  - extending the good practice in teaching of writing
  - ensuring that pupils are fully involved in their learning and that lesson introductions are not too long.
  
- Increase the range and scope of activities in Early Years Foundation Stage to improve children's performance in mathematical calculation and early writing skills.