



OUR LADY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust A Catholic Academy
Old Hale Way, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1XT

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Head Teacher: Ciara Nicholson NPQH

28th June 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write to share with you our Ofsted Inspection Report following the inspection that took place on 13-14th June 2018.

As you all know Our Lady School has been through a period of significant difficulty in recent months, and indeed prior to that, and the challenges we have faced have been reflected in the overall grading for the school which is Requires Improvement.

The inspectors recognised many strengths about Our Lady School. In relation to pupils, they comment:

"Pupils are kind, courteous and welcoming to visitors, staff and other pupils. They support each other's learning with care and thoughtfulness. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. They enjoy their lessons and are eager to do well."

The inspectors also recognised the impact of leadership and management and comment:

"The school has experienced severe turbulence in staffing during the past academic year. This has adversely affected and limited leaders' work in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Even so, staff feel well supported by the headteacher and leadership team. The headteacher and leadership team have an accurate understanding of standards at the school. They are ambitious for the future success of the school and have secured improvements in a short space of time."

The report identifies how far the school has travelled in relation to the key areas of Safeguarding, SEND and Governance, following the three reviews of last year and notes:

"Governors are very supportive of the school. After a sustained period of instability, they have a clear and accurate understanding of how the school needs to improve."

"Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved considerably since the new headteacher commissioned the local authority to conduct an external review in 2017. "

"Safeguarding leaders are highly vigilant and act swiftly and appropriately to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Having identified issues with safeguarding, the headteacher commissioned an external safeguarding review conducted by the local authority which





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found safeguarding practices to be inadequate in 2016. However, within the space of three months, safeguarding leads addressed all of the issues identified by the review. A second review in 2017 by the local authority deemed safeguarding arrangements and procedures at the school to be effective."

There are many other areas we need to work on and embed which we are aware of and which we have already begun to and will continue to address. These areas are highlighted and reflected throughout the report with comments such as:

"Teachers do not consistently use assessment information about pupils to inform the planning and delivery of teaching. As a result, the most able pupils do not complete tasks and activities that challenge them and the pupils with lower prior attainment do not receive sufficient support to enable them to access the tasks. Pupils do not make the progress they are capable of in many areas of the curriculum. Leaders' implementation of reforms in teaching, are enabling some pupils to make better progress across the curriculum. However, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make the rapid progress that they are capable of. Assessment information is now reviewed more carefully to identify personalised support but the quality of support is inconsistent."

On behalf of the school community, I would like to thank Mrs Nicholson and all of the school staff for their tireless commitment to the children in making Our Lady School stronger for the future. The inspectors were immensely grateful to the staff at the time of inspection for all their efforts and recognised the challenging circumstances under which everyone has been working.

As part of a Requires Improvement judgement, the School will receive a monitoring visit in six months' time, at which point, under Mrs Nicholson's leadership, we will have continued the work to improve the School and the School will be in a much more consistent position in relation to teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils.

Kind regards

Neil Adams
Chair of Governors

