



# HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher Mr P.O'Kane

20<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Dear Parents & Carers,

The Ofsted report of the inspection conducted on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November has been published today. You can read it by visiting the Ofsted website, or by clicking on the link on our own school website. If you do not have access to the internet, paper copies are available from the school office.

At our last inspection in October 2011, the school was judged to be GOOD. This time, Ofsted has judged the school as REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT.

We are naturally disappointed, but we acknowledge, as the lead inspector does, that the school has been through a period of great turbulence, with many changes to staffing since 2015—2016 academic year. Recruitment and retention of good staff is a problem that many schools are currently experiencing, but the inspection report notes that new staff members are ensuring an improving quality of provision. The period of turbulence has ended and strong, effective leadership is already enabling the school to make good strides forward. A lot of the evidence the lead inspector looked at and used to inform her judgements is from the last academic year and does not reflect accurately what has happened since September.

Everyone working at the school is committed to addressing the issues that Ofsted has highlighted. Staff and governors will work with Essex LA and the Diocese of Brentwood to build on the current strengths that the school has and to remedy our weaknesses. Our new class teachers all hold subject leadership responsibilities as well their class teaching obligations and since September they have been working hard to deliver improvements linked to their subject action plans. Unfortunately, our inspection came at a very early point in the school year—eleven working weeks since we returned in September has not been long enough to see the fruits of all their labour. When we receive our first HMI monitoring visit in 4—6 months' time, we will have a lot more evidence and be able to demonstrate the impact of (middle) subject leaders throughout the school. The strategic leadership of the school will also be greatly improved as governors are committed to carrying out their role with greater precision.

Whilst we all accept this report, it is important to note that an Ofsted inspection is only one way of looking at a school and as a vibrant, living faith community, we do not share all of Ofsted's values. Nor do we agree with all of Ofsted's statistical analyses. For example, when the lead inspector writes of a "significant minority of parents," she is in fact referring to 14 or 15 parents

out of 300+ parents—she also refused to take into account the 100+ Section 48 surveys that parents submitted for the (deferred) RE inspection.

There is no doubt that much of what is in the report is a fair reflection of where the school is at presently, but many of the issues highlighted by the lead inspector had already been identified and were being addressed by governors, staff, Mrs Hurley and me.

We must all remember the many strengths that the school has: the school's Catholic ethos is clearly evident; pupils are well cared for and looked after; pupils show great tolerance to each other; there are plentiful opportunities to learn about fundamental British values; the curriculum is broad and balanced; the headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that the school is a welcoming and inclusive place in which to learn; safeguarding arrangements are effective; pupils feel safe in school and most parents agree; displays around the school and in classrooms celebrate the wealth of learning experiences.

My passion to create a caring, inclusive school community based on Gospel values is undiminished. I hope that you will all give me, the staff and governors the support that we will need to continue to drive forward for the good of the children in our care. I do not underestimate or diminish some of the criticisms made by the lead inspector and a minority of parents. I want to address these concerns in a positive, constructive manner and look forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead in a spirit of Christian unity and love.

Yours sincerely,

Peter O'Kane