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2 December 2010

Mrs Kathryn Keiran  
Headteacher  
St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School  
Hive Street  
Hollinwood  
Oldham  
Lancashire  
OL8 4QS

Dear Mrs Keiran

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 November and 1 December 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Oldham and the Diocese of Manchester.

Yours sincerely

Brenda McIntosh  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment in English.
- Improve attainment and progress for the most able pupils, particularly in English, by ensuring that lessons consistently include work that provides sufficient challenge for all.
- Establish clear leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the quality of the school's development planning by ensuring that it focuses clearly on the school's most important priorities, identified through accurate and thorough self-evaluation.
- Ensure that the governing body provides sufficient challenge and support to the school and fulfils all statutory requirements.

## **Special measures: monitoring of St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 30 November and 1 December 2010**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, including 11 lessons; scrutinised documents; and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other key staff, a group of governors, pupils and the School Improvement Partner.

#### **Context**

The new assistant headteacher with responsibility for leading and managing the Early Years Foundation Stage took up her post in September 2010. Two new class teachers also took up their permanent posts at the same time. In addition, a teacher returned from maternity leave. The acting assistant headteacher was appointed to a permanent post in November 2010.

#### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

Pupils' achievement continues to improve. The unvalidated results for Key Stage 2 in 2010 indicate that attainment in English is in line with the national average. This is a substantial move forward for the school and has halted a five-year trend of low attainment. The proportions of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 both improved. Of particular significance was the increase in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 in writing from 62.5% in 2009 to 86.8% in 2010. An analysis of the school's data and scrutiny of pupils' work show that, across the school, pupils' attainment and progress in reading and writing continue to improve. Challenging targets are used to accelerate the rate of progress. Teachers' higher expectations of what pupils can achieve is shown in the better quality and improved standard of pupils' work. In lessons, initiatives such as 'Talk for writing' and increased use of drama provide useful stimuli to fire pupils' enthusiasm for writing. As a result, pupils write more and use a wider range of vocabulary to make their work more interesting. Progress in mathematics is still slower than in reading and writing overall but the gap is closing because there is now a sharper focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in this subject. Pockets of underachievement in English and mathematics remain, particularly for pupils in Years 3 and 5, due to previous staffing changes for these cohorts. However, their progress is improving due to the well-focused intervention; as a result, gaps in attainment are beginning to close. There is an improving trend in children's attainment at the end of Reception and in 2010 there was a significant reduction in the difference in attainment between the school's results and national expectations.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise attainment in English – good

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' expectations of what they can achieve have improved and this is leading to their increased enjoyment of learning. Their self-confidence and attitudes to learning are improving. Pupils are now involved more in their own learning and they are developing productive work habits. In the lessons observed pupils were well behaved, engrossed in their learning and made positive contributions to class discussions. Pupils talk proudly about their work and achievements, particularly the improvements to their writing.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

A greater proportion of good lessons were observed during this inspection including some outstanding practice. These findings agree with the school's own most recent monitoring of teaching. Much has been done on planning and matching work to pupils' different abilities and improvements were observed in the lessons seen. Teachers have a better understanding of data and the need to promote and secure good progress. Classroom environments have improved and effective displays support pupils' progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants are supporting pupils' learning more effectively both in and out of the classroom. The marking policy has been updated and pupils now receive clearer guidance on how to improve their work. The use of assessment during lessons is improving with evidence of some strong practice. The school is developing the use of success criteria in lessons so that pupils can check their own learning against these to improve their attainment and progress.

Since the last monitoring inspection the deputy headteacher has taken the lead on improving the attainment and progress for the most-able pupils. She has brought a much sharper focus to driving improvements in this area. The school has a clearer view of the progress pupils are capable of and the provision needed to achieve this. An analysis of the school's data shows a further increase in the number of pupils working at levels above those expected for their age. Pupils' books show that more is now expected of the most-able pupils and their attainment has improved significantly during this term, particularly in writing. The school is part of a pilot project for promoting achievement for all. The work is jointly led by the deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator and is ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Improve attainment and progress for the most able, particularly in English, by ensuring lessons consistently include work that provides sufficient challenge for all – good

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher promotes ambition and raised expectations and this is leading to a growing sense of common purpose throughout the school. Roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have been revised and this is strengthening the leadership team further. A stronger sense of teamwork is emerging and this is influencing the pace of improvement. Leaders at all levels are developing their leadership skills well and making an increased contribution to school improvement. The improvements to the quality, accuracy and analysis of information on pupils' progress have continued. The improved accuracy of monitoring and evaluation is enabling the leaders to pinpoint the weaknesses better and plan effectively to tackle them. Staff training and development continues and is carefully matched to the school's priorities. The school has clear plans to improve the quality of teaching further through peer coaching and sharing the outstanding practice within school. The full impact of some of the more recent actions particularly in eradicating the remaining underachievement is still to be fully determined. Nevertheless the school's capacity to sustain improvement is improving and the school is well on the way to becoming independent of external support.

The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is providing a clearer sense of direction and is building on the improvements seen at the last monitoring inspection. The quality of provision and practice is improving as staff gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities and of the welfare requirements. Action plans are in place and provide a clear strategy for improvement. Planning has been developed and better use is made of data to identify the next steps in teaching and learning. There are improved strategies in place to record children's development. Children's progress is monitored closely on an ongoing basis and more information is available to include in children's learning journeys. This gives a fuller picture of their achievements and more detailed information to share with parents. The quality and consistency of adult interaction in supporting children's learning have improved. However, further improvement is required to ensure children are always sufficiently challenged, particularly in the activities they choose for themselves.

Members of the governing body continue to work hard and with great commitment and have increased their effectiveness further. The monitoring of classroom practice is more robust and sharply focused. Governors have a good understanding of data and how its analysis contributes to the evaluation of the impact of teaching. They challenge senior leaders and hold them to account for the progress pupils make. They ask relevant questions and have the knowledge to ask senior leaders for any

additional information they require. Governors continue to attend parents' evenings to establish a clearer understanding of parents' views and improve relationships further.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of the school's development planning by ensuring that it focuses on the school's most important priorities, identified through accurate and thorough self-evaluation – good
- Establish clear leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage – good
- Ensure that the governing body provides sufficient challenge and support to the school and fulfils all statutory requirements – good.

### **External support**

The local authority and School Improvement Partner provide good support. In recognition of the school's increasing capacity to improve and the need for the school to be able to sustain improvement itself, they are rightly reducing the amount of consultant support.