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25 November 2010

Miss Nicola Latham  
Associate Headteacher  
St Patrick's RC Primary School  
Livesey Street  
Manchester  
M4 5HF

Dear Miss Latham

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 November 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 – satisfactory

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 Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Manchester and the Diocese of Salford.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

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

- In order to raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, the quality of teaching should be improved so that most lessons are good or better by:
  - providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills, share and learn from best practice in a variety of settings
  - ensuring that monitoring of the quality of lessons includes rigorous checking of the progress made by different groups of pupils
  - developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skill and ability
  - ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making sure that all requirements for safeguarding are met
  - improving the rigour of the school's procedures for target-setting, analysis and tracking of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils
  - developing and undertaking a programme of training for governors to improve their role in the strategic leadership of the school
  - increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

## **Special measures: monitoring of St Patrick's RC Primary School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 23 and 24 November 2010**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, visited lessons and observed all of the teachers who were working, scrutinised pupils' work books and the school's documents and met with the associate headteacher, two assistant headteachers, pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and representatives of the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection there have been some changes to the school's context. The IEB continues to carry responsibility for the governance of the school. The headteacher resigned her post in the summer term 2010 and the responsibilities of the headteacher are currently being discharged by an associate headteacher; this arrangement is planned to continue until at least the end of the spring term 2011. The deputy headteacher is currently absent from work and has resigned her post with effect from January 2011; her class is being taught by a temporary teacher who is an acting assistant headteacher. This arrangement is planned to continue until the end of the academic year. Two new teachers are teaching in Key Stage 1 and one has recently taken on the role of special educational needs coordinator. An acting assistant headteacher has been working at the school since June and has responsibility for leading the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage unit, this arrangement will continue until at least the end of the autumn term.

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

The greatest success of the school has been with the unvalidated results for Year 6 pupils in 2010 which were an improvement on the 2009 results; attainment is broadly average. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2010 continues to be below average in all subjects. Across the school, attainment in mathematics lags behind that in English. Senior leaders have correctly identified mathematics as an area for further investigation and improvement. Attainment across the school remains low and in the current Year 5 and Year 6 groups, is particularly low. The school's most recent assessment information indicates that 50% of the current Year 6 group are on track to reach Level 4 in both English and mathematics combined. In Year 5, there are no pupils assessed as being on track to reach this level in both subjects. Leaders are aware that for these groups, progress will need to be accelerated if the school is to reach levels above the Government's floor targets. Assessment information has been inaccurate in the past and, although accuracy across the school is improving, the accuracy of some assessments remains questionable.

Over the last academic year, progress has been inconsistent and for some groups their progress was adversely affected by staffing difficulties. Learning and progress over time are now improving, mainly due to improved teaching. Of particular note are the improved rates of progress in children's skills when using and recognising letters and sounds. There is some evidence in books of pupils improving their writing and spelling skills; this has yet to securely show in their assessed pieces of writing. Half-termly pupil progress meetings are used effectively to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress and to draw up plans to provide additional help to individuals and groups, such as extra spelling lessons.

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement across the school by ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant outcomes for pupils**

The attendance rate, although improving, remains well below average. A notable improvement is in the reduced numbers of children who are persistently absent. Although punctuality is improving, the school is correct to maintain the drive to improve this further.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The overall quality of teaching has improved, no inadequate lessons were seen and an increased proportion was judged to be securely good or had good features. Although improving, there is not yet enough consistency in the quality to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. Given the fact that almost half of the teaching staff were new to the school this term it is to their credit that classrooms are calm and orderly. Good relationships between staff and pupils prevail and behaviour is largely good. There has been a clear improvement in the consistency of identifying learning objectives (WALT- we are learning to), which routinely indicate what teachers would like pupils to know, to be able to do or to understand. Learning intentions are routinely shared with pupils along with the success criteria for the tasks, however, the success criteria (WILF- what I'm looking for) is not always as clearly focused as the learning objectives.

Although the quality of planning has improved, there is still some variability of approach. Where it is particularly effective and supports good teaching and learning, tasks are identified for all ability groups along with pupils' levels of attainment, which is helping to ensure that all groups of pupils are set work at just the right level. However, the inclusion and use of assessment information remains inconsistent. Of particular note is the improved approach to the teaching of writing, which continues to build on previous training. Pupils state that they enjoy the 'Big Write' and their work is beginning to show improvement. The marking of pupils' work has

improved; the use of 'tickled pink', where learning intentions have been achieved and 'green for growth', where further work or improvement is needed is well understood by pupils. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the detail that is provided to focus pupils on how to improve their work. The environment for learning has improved and all classrooms have displays dedicated to English, mathematics and targets. Some good examples of displays being used to support and remind pupils about their learning were observed during the visit. Although the school has appropriate resources for the development of information and communication technology skills (ICT), including a computer suite, the use of these resources to support learning is underdeveloped. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language remains variable. On occasion, pupils who speak English as an additional language are grouped with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is not always appropriate.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage unit the quality of provision continues to improve. The daily routines ensure that children have appropriate opportunities for choosing activities themselves but also have times when they learn about letters and sounds and how to write words and numbers correctly. Children were seen to be engaged in a suitable range of activities for longer periods of time than had been observed previously. Children are safe, happy and understand the routines. Staff interact appropriately with children but there remain times when opportunities are missed for extending pupils' learning and development, particularly in their basic skills. There is scope for all children to be provided with more examples of modelled handwriting, including how to correctly write their own names. Although there have been some good improvements, there remains much to do to ensure that the provision and the quality of adult support helps children to develop as much as they could.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that most lessons are good or better by developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skills and ability – good.

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

The associate headteacher has brought about some very effective improvements in her first term at the school. Of particular note is the effectiveness of her leadership of teaching and learning. She accurately and robustly evaluates the quality and impact of teaching and is tackling underperformance. Staff development, along with the support and guidance that some teachers have received, has clearly brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. Safeguarding remains a high priority for the school and its staff. The single central record of recruitment and vetting

checks is fully up to date. The associate headteacher and the new special educational needs coordinator received the required training on child protection.

The good progress that has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning means that the school is back on track to make the planned progress and emerge successfully from special measures within the expected timescale. The close tracking of pupils' levels of attainment means that leaders can and do put interventions in place to improve the progress of individuals and groups. Regular pupil progress reviews ensure that teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils. Plans for improvement are being implemented and their impact is being checked. However, the fact that improvements have been driven by temporary school leaders means that the improvements are fragile. Although some members of staff are developing their roles as subject leaders appropriately, the effectiveness of leadership at all levels remains variable. The newly recruited temporary assistant headteacher correctly identifies that her role must involve developing the leadership potential of other teachers. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is clear about where most improvement is needed along with staff training and development needs.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Strengthen leadership and management by: making sure that all requirements for safeguarding are met; improving the rigour of the school's procedures for target-setting, analysis and tracking; increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning – satisfactory.

### **External support**

Support for the school has been good. The local authority continues to support the work and the development of the IEB. The local authority has continued to provide substantial resources to support the school, particularly in fully funding the associate headteacher and the assistant headteacher with responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The local authority has also been instrumental in securing the services of the second assistant headteacher. Support continues from advanced skills teachers to aid the development of individual teachers. The local authority is working closely with the IEB and the dioceses to secure longer term and more sustainable leadership at the school.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Further improve teaching so that more is good or better by continuing to embed the use of assessment to support pupils' learning, particularly by:
  - ensuring that the assessment of pupils' levels is accurate
  - ensuring greater consistency in lesson plans so that they all take account of pupils' current levels of attainment in English and mathematics
  - identifying clearer success criteria.
  
- Strengthen leadership capacity at all levels.