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9 November 2011

Mr Mark Booton  
Headteacher  
St Alban's Catholic Primary School  
Newstead Avenue  
Chaddesden  
Derby  
DE21 6NU

Dear Mr Booton

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of St Alban's Catholic Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 8 November, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, as well as the Chair of the Governing Body with whom I spoke, for their time and courtesy. I would also like to thank the pupils for making me feel so welcome.

Since the school's last inspection, four members of staff have left the school. Four new members of staff have been appointed, including two newly qualified teachers.

As a result of the inspection on 9 February 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection, progress has begun to accelerate at Key Stage 2. The unvalidated results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 in the summer term this year indicate that standards in both English and mathematics are above the national average. However, teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2011 indicate that attainment has fallen from the previous year. There is a trend of below national average attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 over a period of time in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress remains inconsistent throughout the school and too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The quality of teaching observed during this inspection was satisfactory overall. The school has introduced a number of strategies designed to bring about improvement in the longer term, including a common lesson planning format. However, the impact of these developments remains inconsistent, and weaknesses in teaching remain similar to those outlined in the last inspection report. The use of assessment to inform planning and to check pupils' understanding remains underdeveloped. Too frequently, the pace of learning slows because teachers do not use information about pupils' abilities to structure their main task well enough to help them undertake it successfully. Additionally, there are sometimes missed opportunities to assess how well pupils are learning during lessons because teachers do not check pupils' responses carefully enough when pupils are using whiteboards, or when using their fingers to indicate numbers. Where teaching is good, pupils are actively involved in focused and purposeful learning, questioning is used effectively to probe pupils' understanding, and work is precisely matched to pupils' learning needs. Although there are signs of improvement, overall, teaching is still not consistently strong enough to ensure that, in all classes, pupils are making good progress.

New systems for monitoring teaching and learning have been established since the previous inspection. However, these systems lack the rigour required to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to secure consistently good teaching in all classes. For example, where satisfactory teaching has been observed, the recorded areas for development are not sufficiently detailed or prioritised as targets for improvement, and there are no review dates for following up whether teachers have improved their practice. Additionally, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and their progress in lessons is not given sufficient priority in written records of monitoring and evaluation activities. Monitoring of planning is undertaken regularly and has improved the consistency of planning across the school. The role of subject leaders in driving improvements is underdeveloped. They do not attend pupil progress meetings and do not hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their subjects. Similarly, subject leaders are not held to account for pupil outcomes in their areas of responsibility.

Following the last inspection, the local authority produced the required statement of action. On evaluation by HMI, the plan was judged to need some amendments. An amended plan was provided at this inspection. There remain weaknesses in this statement. For example, the statement is not aligned with the school improvement plan, systems for monitoring and evaluation lack precision and some key milestones are insufficiently defined and over-optimistic. The limited support that the school has received from the local authority has not been sufficiently focused and has not provided the school with appropriate challenge. As a result, it has not had an impact on increasing the amount of good teaching or in ensuring that senior leaders are rigorously monitoring teaching and learning.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2011**

- Raise attainment and pupils' achievement across the school by:
  - ensuring that all pupils and particularly the more able make consistently good progress in all subjects.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by;
  - ensuring that staff make full use of the range of assessment information to plan and provide activities that fully challenge all groups of pupils.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders take immediate action to address any weaknesses in teaching and learning
  - making sure that senior staff check the quality of planning on a more regular basis
  - ensuring that monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluative
  - making sure all staff with specific responsibilities have the opportunity to develop their role in monitoring provision.