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28 September 2012

Helen Peters  
Headteacher  
Holy Rosary Catholic Primary School  
Hickman Avenue  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 2BS

Dear Mrs Peters

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Holy Rosary Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit with Keith Shannon, Additional Inspector, to your school on 26–27 September 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school’s recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in 27 March 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Wolverhampton and The Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham Education Service.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

## **Her Majesty's Inspector Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012**

- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills
  - improving the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics)
  - improving the precision of pupils' spelling and punctuation, and the accuracy of their grammar
  - ensuring that pupils generate a good amount of writing and have enough time to complete their work
  - making certain that pupils' basic computation skills are secure.
  
- Boost the progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils from Irish Traveller heritages by:
  - enhancing teachers' understanding of how to address the needs of these groups of pupils and by improving their expectations of pupils' capabilities
  - ensuring that support sessions are taught efficiently and meet pupils' individual needs
  - checking the quality of additional support robustly to ensure it has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
  
- Eradicate inadequate teaching and increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
  - making sure that assessment information is used to provide work that is always carefully matched to pupils' ability levels
  - rigorously monitoring learning in lessons including when pupils are working by themselves
  - ensuring that marking and the use of academic targets help pupils understand exactly how to improve their work and by making sure that pupils always respond to this guidance.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on improving achievement in their areas of responsibility
  - ensuring the curriculum is planned to develop pupils' basic skills
  - making certain that assessment information is accurate and that the progress of those who join or leave the school part-way through their primary education is checked thoroughly.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on insert date of inspection**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, including 10 lessons, the majority with a senior leader. They heard pupils read, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the headteacher of the supporting partner school, Edward the Elder school, senior and middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. Additionally a member of the Governing Body and a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Education Service attended the formal feedback at the end of the inspection.

### **Context**

Since the inspection in March 2012, the acting headteacher became the substantive headteacher from April 2012. The Chair of the Governing Body has resigned and the Vice Chair has taken on the Chair's role in an acting capacity until the confirmation of the new Chair. The headteacher and the Vice Chair of the Governing Body attended a 'schools causing concern' seminar in June 2012.

There have been significant changes to the year groups staff teach and the distribution of leadership roles.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The school is developing clear assessment criteria to match the requirements of the revised national framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Staff have been supported by both local authority consultants and subject leaders from the partner school so that the assessments of pupils across all years are now more accurate. This includes arrangements for assessing the progress of pupils who come from other schools and join part-way through their primary education. The progress of pupils is tracked to identify any underperformance of groups or classes.

Early indications show that pupils are now making improved progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Unvalidated results for Key Stage 1 assessments show that attainment has risen in both reading and writing but fell for mathematics. However attainment remains below average.

Unvalidated results for Key Stage 2 tests show significant improvements in the proportion of pupils making at least expected progress in all areas. In writing pupils

made average progress and results showed a big increase in the portion of pupils gaining a level 5.

In lessons progress is variable and ranges from good to inadequate. Pupils have more opportunities to improve their speaking and listening and they often discuss work in pairs or groups. However, such discussion is not always used as a precursor to writing. Pupils write across a variety of different subjects and this has brought about improvements to spelling and grammar. All classes have a daily session to help improve reading. Pupils practise the sounds which different letters make. This is starting to impact on improvements to the quality of reading. Individuals enjoy reading, and often read effectively with understanding and also feeling by using different voice tones or accents for different characters. Pupils' calculation skills and confidence are improving through daily sessions to support their number work.

Pupil premium money has been used for targeted support sessions for weak readers and pupils with poor calculation skills. This has improved the way in which pupils sound out new or difficult words and their mental recall of number facts. The impact of these sessions is monitored and early responses show they are successful in supporting weaker pupils read and also improve their written work. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils from an Irish heritage background are closely monitored and the impact of interventions shows they are making improved progress.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching has improved but it remains variable. There is not enough good teaching. Much requires improvement and some is inadequate. Staff have responded to advice and support so that now there are more opportunities for pupils to discuss their work. However teachers do not always ensure all pupils are equally involved with discussions, consequently, at times, some pupils do not take an equal part.

Assessment information is more accurate, consequently lessons are better matched to the differing abilities within classes. However expectations are not consistently high enough for more able pupils to ensure they make accelerated progress. When teaching is inadequate or weak, it is often because teaching does not focus upon the progress and learning of pupils. There is too much teacher talk and activity and pupils are not challenged with their work because they are listening rather than working or being involved. Questioning rarely extends pupils' understanding. Consequently in these lessons progress is limited.

During lessons staff monitor the work of pupils and intervene when additional support is needed. They use pupil errors effectively as teaching points. Marking has improved both in its frequency and also in its quality. In many books teachers identify additional work and pupils are given time at the start of the next lesson to

respond to this. However pupils are rarely asked for extended answers or challenged on their understanding of the work. Questions are too easily answered by a one word response and the same question is used for a number of pupils which does not reflect upon the prior achievement of individuals.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are generally well behaved around school, although there are occasions where behaviour of individuals needs careful management by staff. Pupils are polite and courteous. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged and show positive attitudes towards their work. However, in some lessons, pupils are not fully interested and engaged, especially when lessons are over-dominated by the teacher. At lunch and break, behaviour is well managed by staff and pupils enjoy their free time. However, there have been a number of exclusions over the last year, often because pupils have been aggressive to each other.

Attendance has risen and the proportion of pupils who have a lot of time off school has reduced.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Senior and middle leaders are developing their monitoring and evaluation expertise. There is an overview of what aspects are going to be monitored and then how these fit into the whole school professional development programme to improve the quality of teaching and hence raise achievement. Leaders have evaluated the quality of planning for both literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have observed teaching and joint observations showed they are reasonably accurate in identifying the correct judgment of its quality and how it can be improved. Senior leaders do not consistently model high quality lessons which can be observed as good practice by other staff. The leadership for improving the overall quality of teaching is supported by local authority consultants and subject leaders from the partner school. The headteacher has been very well supported by both the headteacher of the partner school and the local authority. The school improvement plan rightly identifies the key areas for improvement and there are clear criteria by which the impact of these activities will be evaluated. Evaluations are made against this plan.

Changes to the curriculum has given greater opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills through organised additional mathematics, reading and writing intervention work. Opportunities to write are also integrated across subjects to enable pupils to write in detail and depth across different subjects.

Experienced additional governors have been appointed to the governing body and there is likely to be a new chair in the near future. Governance is supportive of the school but it has lacked the expertise and confidence to challenge the school. For

example the minutes from meetings do not show significant challenge to headteacher's reports. Governors fail to ensure the school undertakes all of the activities it should. Performance management is not well established and the governing body does not evaluate the impact of the school's work, for example how effective pupil premium money has been used.

Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

### **External support**

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose and provides a sound framework for further improvement, including suitable support for the leadership of the school. There are clear success criteria by which it can be evaluated. The headteacher and staff from the partner school have supported the school well, including drawing upon the experience and expertise subject leaders from his own school, along with local authority consultants, to provide additional support. This includes ensuring the accuracy of assessments, improving both the quality of teaching and leadership skills. The school improvement partner, who is also a local authority adviser, works closely and effectively to challenge and support the school. The local authority has undertaken rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching, and the progress made by the school since being placed in special measures.

- Improve the quality and impact of governance by ensuring:
  - they evaluate the impact of the school on raising achievement, particularly for those related to pupil premium money
  - performance management procedures are in place and effective in bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching and in the work of teaching assistants and support staff
  - minutes from the governing body meetings better reflect the level of challenge during those meetings.