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18 December 2012

Mrs Noreen Collins  
Associate Headteacher  
St Alban's Roman Catholic Primary School  
Trinity Street  
Blackburn  
Lancashire  
BB1 5BN

Dear Mrs Collins

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Alban's Roman Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) was taken on a tour of the school and met briefly with all staff. Improvement plans were evaluated and self-evaluation records were considered.

**Context**

Since the inspection in October, additional teaching assistants and welfare staff have been appointed. There have been no other significant changes to staffing or the organisation of the school.

## **Main findings**

The local authority and Diocese acted quickly to put interim leadership arrangements in place until the new headteacher takes up post in January. The associate headteacher has provided effective leadership to keep the school on track with improvement plans and ensure stability. Senior leaders and governors have revised the school development plan and tailored evaluation processes to take account of the areas identified as requiring improvement at the inspection. The plan includes appropriate actions and success criteria for the short term. It provides a firm foundation for improvement, on which to build.

Since the inspection, the main focus has been on improving teacher assessment and marking. The marking scheme has been reviewed to ensure that 'next steps' comments are included and pupils now have personalised targets for writing. Pupils recognise that handwriting and presentation is being given a greater emphasis. They say these developments are helping them improve their writing. Pupils also feel that behaviour has improved as the rules for behaviour are now much clearer.

The school is taking appropriate action to improve the impact of leadership on teaching and achievement. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are now established. Subject leaders' skills are being developed through working alongside local authority advisers. The governing body is taking a more active role in monitoring through reorganised committee meetings and a formal review of policy. Further training is planned to support governors in interpreting data and challenging school leaders.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommends that further action is taken to:

- add specific, measurable and time related targets including pupil progress measures, to the school improvement plan
- identify how governors will monitor the impact of actions on pupils' progress.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The local authority and Diocese have provided good support to the school. They have secured the interim leadership of an experienced headteacher from an outstanding school to strengthen leadership and stabilise staffing after a turbulent period. The local authority has provided significant support to the school over a period of two and half years and will continue to do so as the new headteacher settles into the role.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Diocese of Salford and the Director of Children's Services for Blackburn with Darwen.

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law

**Her Majesty's Inspector**