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Mrs Helen Peters
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 Simon Rowe HMI to your school on 9–10 May 2013, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in 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 be appointed provided the monitoring HMI approves the plans to support the teacher during their induction year.

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 third monitoring inspection on 8–9 May 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including 11 lessons and an overview of books to see the quality of work in mathematics and writing and the effectiveness of marking. They heard pupils read, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the seconded headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body with another governor, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Education Service and groups of pupils.

Context

Since the previous visit, the one-year contract of support from Edward the Elder has finished. A headteacher from St John Bosco Primary School, Sandwell, who is also a Local Leader of Education (LLE), has been seconded for two days each week to support the school as a deputy headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the school was being supported by the Diocese to appoint either a permanent deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher or two assistant headteachers. The school has appointed a part-time special educational needs coordinator.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils are making improved progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's records are very detailed and show that pupils are now making much improved progress each term. However, progress over time is still very low because pupils are making up for previous years of inadequate progress. Records for pupils who are just about to sit their end of Key Stage 2 tests show that the school is likely to be very close to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Pupils are better spellers and are more accurate with their grammar when they write. There are more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work, often including work they are doing as part of the topic they are studying. Pupils are making improved progress with their reading as they respond well to the daily sessions to help them with identifying words by using the sounds letters or groups of letters make (phonics).

The school has been effective in introducing the new ways of assessing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These show that children start with skills and experiences below those expected for children of their age. In particular, levels for social development are low, as are early speech and communication. Children have made very good progress with their reading, and a group were observed being challenged by some very good teaching. All children were able to write words with

the new sound 'oy' by sounding out the words. Most were successful in writing 'enjoy', which was very challenging.

The special educational needs coordinator has identified additional support for reading, writing and mathematics for pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils are withdrawn from their lessons to have either one-to-one or small-group support on the basics of reading, writing or calculation. Results show that most of these interventions are effective, and the school has the reliable data to show where some are not being as effective as others and then investigates how they can be improved. Support for pupils from an Irish Traveller heritage show they are making better progress with their writing and reading.

During the inspection, pupils made at least the progress they should and often did better. Work in books show that the majority of pupils are now making improved progress. There are good examples where pupils are taught to understand their mathematics; for example, making sure that pupils know that for a fraction it needs to be shared into equal parts by dividing by the denominator. This step means that pupils are able to find the fraction parts of any value because this extra step is based around understanding rather than just following instructions and completing examples.

The quality of teaching

Teaching has improved. There is no inadequate teaching and more is judged good, with some outstanding. While there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by the same teacher for different subjects, these are reducing. An increasing proportion of staff have shown that they can and do deliver good lessons.

Work is better matched to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special education needs and pupils from different backgrounds. Staff plan to meet the needs of different ability groups and then check to see how well different groups are progressing. Where teaching is at its best, staff are very good at checking quickly that all pupils are making progress by using mini-whiteboards or by scanning work in books. This means that lessons can be adapted when pupils are making better than expected progress or when pupils need additional support. At times, pupils' answers to questions show they have a misconception. These are used to identify the issue and used as a teaching point to check that others do not have similar problems.

Teachers are skilled at setting clear expectations of how pupils will behave during lessons. Staff are able to gain the attention of the pupils with minimum fuss, and pupils respond well when they are expected to be quiet and listen.

The quality of marking has improved. Work is marked frequently and marking often identifies what a pupil could do to extend their work. When this is most effective, the

extensions are always answered by pupils and staff then check their responses. Extensions are related to the work the pupils have been completing; for example, when completing questions on percentages, asking pupils which fraction is the same as 50%. When this is less effective, pupils are not asked to do anything which will extend their learning or understanding. For example, 'You could have used connectives' or 'Rewrite this work more neatly.' Pupils sometimes ignore extension work or, if they complete it, they repeat the previous error and this is not checked by the teacher.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are generally well behaved around school. Although fights between pupils still happen, the incidents of poor behaviour by a small number of older pupils during lunchtime have reduced. The school identifies different areas of the playground which different ages can use and the 'football' area is away from the main play areas. The best behaved year group are rewarded by additional time in the football area. As the quality of teaching has improved and more lessons are challenging and interesting, pupils pay greater attention in class and are able to work more readily by themselves.

Attendance has risen but, in Years 1 and 2, it is well below that in other years.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

There has been a significant improvement to the way in which senior leaders check on the quality of teaching and bring about improvements. The seconded headteacher has been highly effective by supporting middle and senior leaders to bring about improvements, both to the quality of leadership and how leaders improve the quality of teaching. Staff have been very positive about the support they have received and how the coaching has given them greater confidence and belief in their own abilities. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and there is a higher proportion of good teaching.

The school's records show that pupils who receive additional support for reading are generally making good progress in catching up with their peers. Additional support for mathematics is also bringing about improvements, although the school has identified some interventions which are not been as effective as others. It uses this information to find out exactly why this is the case and how the work can be changed to better meet the needs of the pupils.

Governance has improved. Governors are challenging the school from an informed position and they are holding the school to account for its actions. The progress information which is shared with governors is more detailed and accurate. Governors check on how effective the additional support is for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and for pupils for whom the school receives

additional government funds (pupil premium). They closely check on how these groups are progressing compared to others within the school, and the progress of pupils from different backgrounds or who arrive partway through the school year.

Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

External support

The local authority's statement of action continues to give a sound framework for further improvement. The school has made good progress against the plan and it has made up for the lost ground identified the previous report. The headteacher, seconded headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher have worked well together and are developing ways by which the improvements to leadership are sustained when the support is reduced and withdrawn. The School Improvement Officer, who is also a local authority adviser, works closely and effectively to challenge and support the school. The local authority continues to systematically evaluate the quality of teaching and the progress made by the school since being placed in special measures. These are reported to the task group. The school has also been supported by the local authority for the leadership of special educational needs.