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27 June 2013

Mr Phillip Hallman  
Headteacher  
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School  
Conwy Court  
Castlefields  
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WA7 2JJ

Dear Mr Hallman

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 and 26 June 2013, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 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 and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Halton.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2012



## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to at least national average levels by:
  - improving rapidly the progress all pupils make in their learning
  - ensuring the assessments of what pupils can do are secure, particularly so in writing
  - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good across the school
  - ensuring suggestions made to pupils for improving their work, in marking for example, are followed through with rigour and consistency
  - revising the register of pupils with special educational needs so that pupils are placed at the most appropriate stage to best support their learning and development.
- Improve the quality of leadership, including governance, and strengthen the school's capacity so that both are at least good by:
  - ensuring all actions identified in improvement plans are followed through systematically and with rigour and that leaders report clearly the impact of these actions on pupils' learning
  - providing training for all subject leaders and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader so they are confident in reporting the quality of achievement and teaching in their areas and that their judgements are based on secure evidence
  - ensuring records of concern about individual pupils are refined so that they provide a systematic overview of any actions taken and the resultant impact.
- Ensure that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from the recently developed learning environment, particularly the outdoor area, so that their overall development is enhanced.

## **Special measures: monitoring of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 June 2013**

#### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, representatives from the local authority, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body.

#### **Context**

Since the last inspection, one teacher has resigned and two temporary teachers will be leaving at the end of term. Two new teaching appointments have been made for September 2013.

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

During the inspection HMI saw pupils enjoying their learning and generally they showed good attitudes in lessons. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics.

Tracking of attainment and progress for all individuals and groups of pupils is now in place. Information from tracking data shows that pupils' attainment is not high enough and most are not achieving the standards they are capable of reaching. However, the most recent data show that some pupils are now making better progress and some are beginning to catch up with their learning. Rates of progress are indicating that pupils, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, are closing the gap between their attainment and what is expected nationally. The most progress across the school can be seen in reading, and in some classes, especially in Years 5 and 6, pupils are making better than expected progress. Leaders accurately predict that assessments made at the end of Key Stage 1 will be better than those from the previous year. Assessments made for Year 6 show that most pupils are achieving close to the national average.

Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who have a parent in the armed forces, are still not making the progress expected. As a result the progress they make is resulting in them falling further behind their peers. Leaders are in the early stages of evaluating how effectively the pupil premium funding is used.

Data show that girls are performing better than the boys in reading, writing and mathematics. There is little evidence of what the school intends to do to rectify this situation.

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to at least national average levels – satisfactory

### **The quality of teaching**

Changes in staffing and continued instability continue to hamper the school's progress in improving teaching and learning. However, initiatives are beginning to have some impact on raising the quality of teaching. For example, a programme of peer observations has taken place where teachers have observed each other teach, have planned and delivered lessons in pairs and also observed good practice in local schools. Training has been delivered to staff to support improvements in teaching. Moderation of pupils' writing has taken place to ensure teachers are more confident in making assessments on pupils' achievements.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work has improved. Teachers are increasingly providing pupils with next steps in their learning. However, there remains too much variation in how pupils' work is marked, and too little guidance given to pupils to improve their mathematics work.

Teachers are helping pupils to become successful in their learning. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding and they provide opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively through talking partners so they are more active learners. Some learning is effective because teachers provide a clear structure to lessons and high expectations prevail. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson pupils enjoyed writing poems using personification. The learning was challenging and structured, which enabled pupils to achieve success. However, some teaching is still not good enough. This is because teachers fail to plan activities sufficiently well and activities are not tailored well enough to meet pupils' individual needs.

Pupils report that they have targets for mathematics and writing, which are in the front of their books. However, these are not referred to enough and pupils report they no longer have targets for reading.

The Early Years Foundation Stage learning environment is orderly and reasonably well organised. However, insufficient emphasis is given to develop children's mathematical understanding. There are too few mathematical activities to extend children's thinking and children cannot access enough mathematical tasks independently. For example, in the role-play area the 'cash till' contains no money. Children's achievements are recorded in 'learning journeys'. In some, there is no reference made to children's achievements in number and it is unclear what children can or cannot do in this area. In the outside environment there is no regard given to supporting children's mathematical skills.

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

- improve the quality of teaching – satisfactory

- ensure that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from the learning environment - inadequate

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is best when they are engaged in interesting and exciting learning activities. In these lessons, pupils are keen to learn and they show good attitudes to learning. In weaker lessons their attention wanders, which has a negative effect on their behaviour. Pupils are well mannered to each other and to adults. They report that incidents of bullying are rare and when they do occur they are quickly dealt with. However, pupils reported that the mid-day supervisors were less likely to tackle poor behaviour.

Attendance remains low and has declined from the previous year. Parents are reminded, through newsletters, of the importance of their children regularly attending school. There are a range of positive incentives in place to encourage pupils to attend school and close links have developed between the school and the education welfare officer.

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

Leaders at all levels, along with the diocese and local authority have taken steps to ensure the safety of pupils in school.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have remained focused on improving pupil outcomes and teaching and learning across the school. This is reflected in the school development plan. The plan has been updated and is reviewed regularly. However, at the present time the plan indicates actions until the end of the term but there is no view of how the school will develop beyond this time. The plan is informed by monitoring across the school. The monitoring calendar has been revised and is now more rigorous and includes a range of activities which enable the headteacher and other leaders in school to gain an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring is carried out by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. Activities include scrutiny of lesson planning, observation of lessons, learning walks, team teaching and pupil interviews. Pupil progress meetings are more focused and a set of actions are agreed on how to improve outcomes for pupils who are not making enough progress. Information gathered from the lesson observations indicate that the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. From the lessons observed during the inspection, HMI would support this view.

The register of pupils with special educational needs has been revised and now reflects a more accurate picture of pupils' needs. This is beginning to inform a provision map which will indicate how best to support pupils.

Thought has been given to the curriculum and it is based on developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Themed weeks are popular and the school recently spent a week studying history across the ages, which was based on pupils' interests. Pupils report there is

less time devoted to topic work and a greater emphasis given to developing English and mathematical skills and religious education. Pupils in Key Stage 2 report, and HMI agrees, that the curriculum is not broad and balanced enough, with too little emphasis given to music and physical education.

Governors are more involved with the school. For example, the chair of governors is visiting classrooms on a more regular basis. This gives a better oversight of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Governors are provided with regular updates from the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and, as a result, they have a better awareness of pupils' progress. There are however, some inconsistencies in the application of policies and procedures for which the governors are responsible. Furthermore, the school's website is of a poor quality and does not include all aspects of the government's statutory requirements.

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

- improve the quality of leadership, including governance, and strengthen the school's capacity so that both are at least good - satisfactory

## **External support**

The local authority has been instrumental in securing the services of professionals who are helping to secure school improvement. This has helped improve teaching and learning, which is beginning to impact on pupils' outcomes. The local authority has provided valuable support to the school's leaders and governors on the appointment of new teachers for September. The local authority has facilitated links with local schools, which is providing effective support for teachers and teaching assistants. Regular reviews take place to monitor the school's performance.