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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 to your school on 17–18 September 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 fourth 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.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 17–18 September 2013**

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, including 13 lessons. I scrutinised documents and met with the senior leaders, the seconded deputy headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body with another governor, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.

### **Context**

Since the previous visit, three teachers have left and they have been replaced by two permanent teachers and one who is on a long-term temporary contract. The acting deputy headteacher has been appointed permanent assistant headteacher.

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

Achievement continues to improve. The school arranged for external checks on their assessments for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and writing at the end of Key Stage 2. All were found to be accurate. The school's own assessments of levels for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 for reading and mathematics were comparable with the outcomes of national tests. This shows the school now has accurate assessment information.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, achievement is below average. While many children met the levels expected for their age, few exceeded them. Children have made a very good start during the first few weeks of term. They have quickly learned the school's expectations and routines. They respond well, concentrating when being taught as whole group before going to work by themselves or with another adult.

Pupils continue to make improved progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Results for the Year 1 screening for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) show the proportion of pupils meeting the nationally expected level to have risen from well below average last year to above average. For those pupils who failed to meet the expected level in 2012. The great majority went on to meet it in 2013.

Pupils make good progress with their reading. From being well below average in the Year 1 reading checks, the same pupils' Key Stage 1 reading test results show standards to be above average. This is outstanding progress for these pupils. Overall levels in writing and mathematics are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1.

Early results for Key Stage 2 tests show that the proportion of pupils who meet the nationally expected levels for reading, writing and mathematics has risen and is broadly average. However, more-able pupils have not made as good progress, and

the proportion that exceeded the expected levels has fallen and is low. The school has responded quickly to this and is giving additional support to pupils who should achieve the higher levels. Results for the recently introduced spelling, punctuation and grammar test were disappointing and low.

Pupils who receive additional support because they have special educational needs are making improved progress. At times, these pupils make good progress, particularly when they have one-to-one or small-group support on the basics of reading, writing or calculation. Other additional support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is being successful in improving reading and writing but less so for mathematics. Pupils from an Irish Traveller heritage are making better progress with their writing and reading.

The school's accurate records show that progress in reading and writing was good from September 2012 to July 2013. Progress in mathematics was good for most years but achievement in mathematics is below that of the other areas. This is because pupils are making up for poor previous teaching which left some without a good understanding of number and place value.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved. There is no inadequate teaching and more is judged good, with some outstanding. Recent whole-school priorities are improving the quality of teaching. For example, more lessons include opportunities for pupils to practise their reading in a systematic way.

Work is better matched to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special education needs and more-able pupils. The school rightly recognised that they were not consistently stretching the most able. Staff now plan to meet the needs of the most able and then adjust their planning to support the different groups in the class, rather than planning for middle ability pupils. This gives greater challenge for higher ability pupils. Staff are skilled in checking how well pupils are progressing during lessons by using mini-whiteboards or by scanning work in books. Staff then adapt their teaching to provide additional support or challenge as appropriate.

Teachers set clear expectations of how pupils should 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; for example, the use of 'magnet eyes'.

The quality of marking has improved so that now all work identifies an area which pupils can focus on to extend learning. However, not all pupils are given time to respond to these questions and so this is not being used as effectively as possible.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this has meant more pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Staff often link work with the topic they are covering and this gives the work greater relevance. For example, teachers used drama about the story of a visit to the underworld in Roman times as a precursor to writing about it, or used creatures under the sea as a way of introducing parts of the body.

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

Pupils are generally well behaved around school and in the playground. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 now take responsibility for helping to make sure that fellow pupils play well together. This has meant incidents of fighting have ceased.

Pupils say there are occasional incidents of bullying. When these occur, they are confident that there is a teacher to whom they can turn for support. When incidents happen, the school provides support for both the children concerned and their parents and carers. They support both the perpetrator and the victim to help eliminate all such incidents.

Attendance has risen in 2013, but low attendance in Years 1 and 3 mean overall attendance figures are still below average. The school has greatly reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent and have too much time off school. This is now below that seen for similar schools and close to the national average.

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

The quality and effectiveness of leadership within the school continue to improve. There are now greater opportunities for middle leaders to develop teaching and the work to be covered for their year teams. This has given greater purpose to the topics covered. Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account for their work and check all is progressing well. As the school improves, it is increasing the variety of subjects taught while still ensuring that the basics of reading, writing and mathematics are covered.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning. They have been well coached by the seconded deputy headteacher, whose time is being reduced as the leadership team become more confident and self-reliant. Observations have also been made by the middle leader with responsibility for reading and she has identified what needs to be improved in some lessons. She then models good practice to support improvements. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and there is a higher proportion of good teaching.

The school uses progress information well to identify which classes are making at least the progress they should and which need greater challenge. This data is far more accurate and hence evaluations are more secure.

Governance has improved. Governors are now challenging the school from an informed position and they are holding the school to account for its actions. A consequence is that headteacher's reports are more detailed and are backed up by specific figures. Governors find the evaluation group, which was set up when the school was made subject to special measures, as highly effective in holding leaders to account. They plan to continue with this group in the future. Progress information, which is shared with governors, is effective in letting governors check on how well additional support is being used 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 on the progress of pupils from different backgrounds.

The school uses some of the additional funds for physical education (PE) to buy in coaching from a local group for pupils in all years. It has identified the need to extend expertise for the teaching of PE and has allocated funds to train teachers.

Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

### **External support**

The local authority's statement of action has now served its purpose as a framework for further improvement. The school has made good progress against the plan and is now looking at areas it needs to improve beyond those identified within the original inspection report. The headteacher, seconded deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher have worked well together. This support is being reduced as the school becomes more able to work by itself. 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.