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15 November 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 13 and 14 November 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 fifth 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 - satisfactory

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**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **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 fifth monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 November 2013**

#### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, the deputy headteacher, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives from the academy sponsor and representatives from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the last inspection, two class teachers have joined the school. The senior leadership has changed, with a new member who has responsibility for raising standards. A breakfast club has started, run by the governing body. A teaching assistant has taken on the additional role of attendance mentor and two new governors have been appointed to the governing body.

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

Overall pupils are beginning to make better progress and standards are beginning to rise. This is because pupils enjoy their learning and work hard in lessons. Results are improving at a faster rate in mathematics than in reading and writing.

Although some areas of learning are showing improvements, this is not the case in all subjects. For example, too few pupils achieved the expected level in the Year 1 phonic check and girls achieved significantly better than the boys. It remains unclear how the school intends to develop the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and there is no plan in place to show how the school intends to improve pupils' phonic knowledge.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 remain a concern because they are significantly lower than expected. Attainment in reading and mathematics has improved from the previous year but writing remains a focus for the school. The progress pupils make in mathematics continues to increase.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 remains below the national average, but data suggest that the school is closing the gap between the standards the school reaches and national expectations. However, leaders acknowledge that the more-able pupils need to achieve more.

Current internal data held by the school show that pupils are now beginning to make better progress. Since September all year groups have made better than expected progress. It also demonstrates that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are achieving better and are closing the gap between their level of attainment and that of their peers.



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**

During the inspection no inadequate teaching was seen and across the school there is some teaching that is helping pupils achieve better progress. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils made good progress in science because the teacher had high expectations of what pupils could achieve. Pupils were challenged to develop an investigation based on light and shadows and they worked collaboratively to find solutions. However, this is not always the case and some teaching still requires improvement. Here, lessons do not challenge all groups of pupils sufficiently and, as a result, they do not consistently make good progress. This is most noticeable for the more-able pupils.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the teaching they receive. They report that learning is more interesting. They believe that teaching is improving over time and that recent improvements to the quality of teaching are helping them to learn. As one of the older pupils said, 'Little ones will have better learning opportunities to become something good by the time they leave school.'

Work to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in an improved learning environment. Children are better able to access areas of learning and they are given opportunities to explore, learn and develop. Children readily access the outdoor environment. The progress they make is recorded but this is not done regularly enough. As a result planning to use the environment is not always adapted according to the children's next steps.

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 - satisfactory

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

The behaviour of pupils continues to improve. In lessons, pupils show a willingness to learn and have good attitudes to learning. They work well together and show a determination to complete tasks set by the teacher. Pupils report that learning is more fun and more is expected of them in lessons. This is having a positive effect on their attitudes to learning.



Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and they are aware of the increased security of the site. Pupils report incidents of bullying are rare and are quickly dealt with when they occur.

An internal appointment of an attendance mentor is proving successful. Absence rates are now more rigorously monitored and the school is working more closely with the local authority. A greater emphasis is now given to pupils arriving at school on time. Evidence provided by the school indicates that absence rates are beginning to reduce. The attendance mentor is examining how well different groups attend school. This shows there is little variation in the attendance of different groups.

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

You continue to work closely with the governors and they value your contribution to school improvement. You know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the senior leadership team has developed a current position statement. This provides an evaluation to show how well the school is performing. Tracking of pupils' progress has improved including monitoring the progress of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for children in local authority care or for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Although this is reported to parents and carers, there is insufficient detail in telling parents and carers how effectively this money is spent.

There is a longer term vision for the school which is shared by all staff. Senior leaders record their findings in the school's development plan. However, the plan does not sufficiently reflect the self-evaluation documentation and the current data. For example, the more-able pupils are not achieving as well as they should, yet this is not identified as an area for improvement.

Staff have created teams to develop English, mathematics and religious education. They are beginning to develop their thinking about how best to move their subjects forward.

Governors continue to support and challenge the school. They know the school well and have a wealth of data on the performance of pupils and groups. As a result they are well informed about school improvement. Although a core group of governors visit the school and are heavily involved in monitoring the progress the school is making, not all governors are involved enough.

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 and diocese continue to work in strong partnership with the school. All are focused on a shared agenda and this is helping the school to improve. All parties are working towards the school becoming an academy and plans are underway of how this will develop. Links have been made with successful schools and this is supporting improvements in school.

