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11 July 2014

Mrs Sara Bayley  
Headteacher  
St James' CofE Primary School Gorton  
Stelling Street  
Gorton  
Manchester  
M18 8LW

Dear Mrs Bayley

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St James' CofE Primary School Gorton**

Following my visit to your school on 10 July 2014, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and the diocesan adviser. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were reviewed. The single central record, which records employment suitability checks carried out by the school, was checked.

### **Context**

One member of staff has left since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require special measures. An Interim Executive Board has been established to

replace the existing governing body from September 2014. Discussions have taken place with two academy chains about the future status of the school.

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

The headteacher has responded rigorously to the previous inspection. The leadership team has been reorganised to identify more specific areas of responsibility, including the monitoring of learning and support for individual teachers. This has improved the collection of evidence about pupils' progress and identified where weaknesses in teaching need to be addressed. The governing body is supportive of the school and is seeking to extend its range of experience and skills. An external review of governance has not taken place as the governing body is due to be replaced by the Interim Executive Board.

The school's improvement plan directly addresses the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. There is a clear emphasis on outcomes for pupils and for particular groups of pupils. Timescales and strategies are clear and appropriate. There is considerable emphasis on improvements to teaching, although the plan would be improved by a more direct link of actions to be taken with the particular areas of weakness identified in the report. The plan includes a range of strategies for improving achievement in English and mathematics such as opportunities to extend basic skills across the curriculum and tackling underperformance by particular groups.

The local authority's statement of action is detailed and identifies clearly the broad range of support to be offered. There are suitable arrangements for keeping parents informed of developments. A review of teaching and learning has already taken place. Teaching and curriculum support are to be provided largely by a local academy. The plan includes a detailed outline of the various strategies for checking and reviewing progress. However, there is an occasional lack of clarity about the support to be provided by the local academy in addressing particular weaknesses listed in the report.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Manchester and the Diocese. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett

**Additional Inspector**