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5 December 2014

Mrs Collette Denby  
Headteacher  
St Christopher's Catholic Primary School  
Tarbock Road  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L24 0SN

Dear Mrs Denby

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of St Christopher's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 December 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in November 2013. 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 the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director for Children and Young Peoples Services for Liverpool and the Catholic Diocese of Liverpool.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and all pupils achieve well by ensuring that:
  - all tasks are well matched to pupils' needs to ensure maximum progress for all learners in their reading, writing and mathematics over time
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in linking letters and sounds and that those struggling with their reading are given reading books at the appropriate level
  - pupils have work that really challenges them to achieve as much as possible, especially in their writing and mathematics tasks and particularly for the boys.
  
- Raise standards and accelerate the rate of progress for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum
  - giving pupils more opportunity and real purpose to write longer pieces of work, especially in Key Stage 1
  - enabling pupils to develop a love of reading across different curriculum areas
  - ensuring grammar, punctuation and spelling and the consistent marking of these, has a high priority to impact on pupils' writing
  - planning more challenging activities to develop pupils' skills in mathematics in Key Stage 1.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - developing further the current approaches to improve attendance and, in particular, punctuality, including those that involve the support of parents
  - ensuring more robust leadership of teaching leads to consistently good and better teaching.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on Thursday 4 December 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, a group of eight pupils, two members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and members of the school's wider leadership team. The inspector visited every class to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work in books. He was accompanied by a school leader for each of these visits. The inspector also looked at a range of documentation, including the school's system for checking the progress pupils are making.

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

The headteacher and the wider leadership team are successfully improving the school. Supported and challenged increasingly effectively by the governing body, actions to bring about improvements are being taken in a more timely fashion.

The environment is bright and stimulating and this is appreciated by pupils. Pupils spoken with also reported how they believed their learning was improving. They are right to think this as unvalidated data for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2014 show higher attainment than in 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders' focus on disadvantaged pupils is paying particularly good dividends. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is closing. Pupils, including younger pupils, are reading with more confidence. To keep an even closer eye on the performance of pupils, leaders, in partnership with the local authority, have introduced a new system of checking progress. Coupled with pupil progress meetings, this system is identifying well where pupils may be falling behind. Where this occurs, leaders are acting quickly and providing support and challenge to pupils as appropriate. While this system is proving to be most helpful, leaders agreed with the inspector that collecting information about all pupils at more regular intervals would provide an even sharper focus on which pupils were doing well and which needed additional help.

Leaders have also brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is best and pupils are making best progress, pupils are challenged to think more deeply about their learning. Pupils in Year 6, for example, considered the different motions made by various fairground rides. By building up an understanding of technical vocabulary such as 'linear' and 'oscillation' and by being challenged by the teacher to explain these terms, pupils were beginning to use this knowledge to think about fairground rides they could create. Furthermore, the good questions asked by teachers in lessons help pupils to clarify their own thinking and know more keenly how they themselves are performing. It is not just teachers who are asking increasingly good questions. Teaching assistants do so too. An assistant in a Reception-aged class, for example, working with a small group of children struggling in mathematics to find one more than a given number, had the same high

expectations as the teacher. By asking the same questions but in different ways appropriate to the needs of her group, the children in the group she was supervising made as much progress as others in the class. Sometimes, though, expectations of what pupils should do are not consistently high. Despite good improvements in providing opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects, some work pupils are expected to complete is not challenging enough. Sometimes, despite being able to write interesting paragraphs and accounts a few weeks earlier, pupils sometimes write just one word answers that do not extend their learning.

Leaders have brought about improvements to marking and feedback. Quality, though, is inconsistent. Where teachers check responses to corrections or additional challenges, pupils make increasingly good progress. Where the checking is not routine, errors and misconceptions are repeated. Sometimes there is a difference in quality between one class in a year group and another. Leaders rightly plan to share the best examples of such marking and feedback and to check more rigorously that staff are consistently meeting this high standard.

Attendance is improving. It currently stands at 95%, an improvement of 1% on this time last year.

### **External support**

Leaders and governors have benefited from good levels of support and challenge from the local authority. The local authority's reports and reviews, for example, provide an increasing range of evidence which is helping governors to support and challenge the school. The school is also benefiting from being a part of a local authority project to ensure assessments are accurate. Furthermore, support to improve further the quality of provision in the early years is also paying dividends.