

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment  
Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01695 566857

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jkinsman@cftb.com



3 December 2014

Mrs Bernadette Galloway  
Interim Headteacher  
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School  
Conwy Court  
Castlefields  
Runcorn  
Cheshire  
WA7 2JJ

Dear Mrs Galloway

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Halton**

Following my visit to your school on 2 December 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous inspection in February 2012 the school was judged to require special measures.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure teachers' marking and feedback in mathematics builds on the progress made in teaching and learning in this subject to challenge pupils further in their mathematical thinking and understanding.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the headteacher of the supporting school (Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary, Wirral), three representatives of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority, and a representative of the diocese to discuss the action taken since the

last inspection. I also met with a group of eight pupils and toured the school looking at pupils' work in mathematics in particular. I evaluated the school improvement plan and scrutinised a range of documentation relating to, for example, performance management and attendance.

## **Context**

The school population has grown significantly in number since the September 2014 inspection. Seventeen new pupils, mainly from Traveller community families, have joined the school.

## **Main findings**

The change in culture identified in the inspection of September 2014 continues at a pace. The school continues to improve. Under the leadership of the interim headteacher and the support school, high expectations of teaching and learning are clear. This is because the leaders' plans for improvement are understood and focused on the most important areas. It is also clear to staff, through arrangements for performance management for example, that all are accountable for the performance of pupils. Sharper systems are in place to record what pupils know already and what support is required for them to improve their rates of progress. For example, the attainment of Traveller pupils is checked very quickly after they arrive in school.

The school still depends heavily on the support of staff and leaders from Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School. All partners – the diocese, local authority and the governors – recognise this. Equally, they and leaders know internal capacity requires further strengthening. To this end, the interim headteacher and support school colleagues are modelling well the features of strong teaching, assessment and leadership.

Teaching assistants are used increasingly well to support teaching and learning. To support pupils' learning in mathematics and literacy for example, teaching assistants ask questions that encourage pupils to think more deeply about what they are learning. This approach to teaching – encouraging deeper thinking and mastery of new ideas – is paying dividends. In mathematics for example, pupils of all ages solve problems using a range of resources with which they are encouraged to find different solutions and, if necessary, make mistakes. The result is that they increasingly know what their strengths and weaknesses are in this subject. Teachers' marking of such work, however, while identifying what pupils have achieved and what they should do next, does not routinely check next steps have been completed, nor does it routinely set challenges to deepen pupils' understanding.

Governors, like leaders, know the school's strengths and areas to develop further. They hold leaders to account by checking the progress made in meeting targets set in the improvement plan. The external review of governance is planned for February

2015. Already governors have self-assessed their own strengths and areas for development and these are to inform the National Leader of Governance engaged to carry out the review. The website has been updated to meet requirements.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection or until it becomes a sponsored academy.

### **External support**

The local authority and diocese know the school well. The local authority has provided substantial levels of financial support to the school since spring 2012 in order to broker a range of support including that from Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School. This support continues. The capacity of governance is also strengthened by the continued membership of a key local authority officer. The diocese continues to work tirelessly to ensure the school becomes an academy sooner rather than later. All partners share the view that the school will be better placed to secure sustainable leadership once academisation takes place.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Halton and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools