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4 February 2016

Mrs Andrea Towey  
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School  
Henshall Avenue  
Latchford  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA4 1PY

Dear Mrs Towey

**Special measures monitoring inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 January 2016, 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 that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in April 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Shrewsbury, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Warrington Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in April 2014

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order that pupils across the school make good progress, particularly in mathematics and in writing, by ensuring that:
  - time is regularly given for pupils to check, correct or rewrite their work in response to the guidance given to them through the marking they receive
  - teachers check more frequently on the progress of pupils so work can be adapted more quickly, particularly for the most able, to better meet their learning needs
  - teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and completion of work are raised
  - support from teaching assistants is always of good quality and is well matched to the individual pupils' needs
  - pupils are given more opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical and writing skills in different subjects, in Years 1 to 6
  - pupils in Years 1 and 2 are secure in their learning and understanding of sounds and letters
  - across Years 1 to 6, pupils consistently spell words correctly, present work neatly, legibly and with accuracy
  - pupils are consistently interested in their work so that their attitudes to learning are always good and they readily respond to teachers' requests to complete their work.
- Urgently increase the impact of leadership at all levels, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - accurate data is used and clearly summarised, to frequently measure the speed and effect of actions taken to improve teaching and pupils' achievement
  - prompt action is taken to enable teachers to meet their individual targets to improve their performance more quickly, particularly in the teaching of mathematics but also in writing
  - senior leaders decisively and more quickly tackle weaknesses in subject leadership, particularly in mathematics.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 26–27 January 2016**

### **Evidence**

I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and six other governors, three teachers and two middle leaders and eight pupils chosen at random from Years 3 to 6. I spoke to the parents and grandparents of 12 pupils from Nursery to Year 5, teachers and pupils in class and also a number of support staff around the school. I examined a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and information on pupils' attainment and progress. I looked at pupils' books and displays of their work around the school and heard pupils read. In addition, I held a meeting with a representative from the local authority and had a telephone conversation with the diocesan representative.

### **Context**

The school has recently appointed a new temporary leader for English.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Since the last monitoring visit, the leaders have been unrelenting in bringing about further improvements in the school.

Last term, they commissioned an external review of early years provision and sought advice from external consultants and successful practitioners in other schools. As a result, several changes have been made. For example, children now have opportunities to develop and apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in a wider range of contexts than was previously the case. Additional help is provided for those who are taking longer to reach a good level of development. The school's own analysis indicates that these approaches have led to improvements but teaching in this area still lacks pace. More ambitious targets have been set for the early years children but there are no milestones to check whether they are on track to meet them.

In response to the last monitoring report, the leaders have identified specific areas of improvement for individual teachers and have worked alongside them to help them improve their skills, for example in questioning, classroom organisation and ensuring that pupils of all abilities are given challenging work. This is having a positive effect, as the school's own analysis shows and as was seen in the lessons visited during the inspection.

The most recent self-evaluation has resulted in a succinct and clear document that traces the developments and improvements made since the school was judged to require special measures two years ago. It also identifies the further developments that need to be made to ensure that the school is solidly good.

The leaders have succeeded in communicating a very clear sense of purpose to the staff. The cross-section of teachers who met with me spoke highly of the support and challenge provided by the headteacher and the way that she ensured that they focused on improving specific aspects of their own practice, while also contributing to improving provision across the school. Morale among staff is high.

The change in leadership of mathematics, implemented soon after the last section 5 inspection, continues to have a positive impact on raising standards in the subject. The recently appointed temporary leader for English has received very good support from the senior leaders and has further strengthened the school's focus on improving spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The quality of governance continues to improve. The members of the governing body who spoke to me had a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, gained from briefings they had received from school staff, as well as regular visits to the school and to classrooms. They have made a concerted effort to improve their understanding of data and other information, and are now using this to hold the leaders increasingly to account. They now have a shared determination to ensure that pupils of all abilities across the school make good progress and attain well. They are making appropriate use of the additional pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils.

The parents and grandparents who spoke to me were unanimous in their praise of the school and its staff.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The school's own records show that teaching continues to improve. The specific, additional help provided for individual members of staff has led to far greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Work is carefully matched to the differing abilities of pupils. Teachers now make better use of questioning to explore pupils' understanding and to prompt them to extend and clarify their thinking. The school's marking policy is being consistently implemented and pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

The teaching assistants play a crucial role in supporting pupils of all abilities in the classroom. They plan their work carefully alongside the class teachers and know exactly what is expected of them.

The school has detailed information on the progress of every pupil. This is used for the regular tracking of the progress and attainment of individuals, groups and classes. It is also used to review the quality of teaching in individual classes and across the school.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They relate well to each other and to adults. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and even the youngest hold doors open for others, without any prompting. They arrive on time at school and at their lessons, are well organised and get on with their work. Attendance continues to improve. Last term it was above the national average and better than at the same time last year.

The pupils who spoke to me said that they feel safe at school and when travelling to and from school. They know whom to contact if they have any problems and are confident that they will receive prompt advice and help. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using social media, and spoke with enthusiasm about the recent 'e-safety week'. They said that, in the past, there had been some bullying in the school but this had been dealt with effectively and none of the pupils interviewed had experienced any bullying personally.

Currently, there is a whole-school focus on 'Respecting ourselves and others'. As part of this, anyone noticing an example of a respectful action is asked to record it on a leaf which is attached to the 'Tree of respect' in the school hall. Each class is also preparing a short video for the school's website on the work which they have done around this theme. Pupils' sense of responsibility is further developed through their work in raising funds for charities and organising collections for the local food bank. They have recently gained a national bronze award which celebrates their work in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. In addition, the school has received a local authority bronze award for providing healthy snacks at break times.

The efforts to ensure safe parking outside the school continue to be effective. Pupils designed banners and notices to ensure this and are now preparing to take a more active role in 'policing' the parking for themselves. They have further opportunities to develop their leadership skills through membership of the school council.

Fire practices are held each half term and carefully recorded, with actions for improvement noted meticulously. The pupils who spoke to me knew exactly what to do in the case of an emergency.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

The school's self-assessment traces the improvement in outcomes for pupils over the last three years. The most dramatic improvements have been made at Key Stage 2, where the most recent results in national tests exceeded the national averages in each subject area. The school's analysis of data indicates that these improvements are set to continue. The most recent internal tracking indicates that every class in Key Stage 2 is making faster progress than in previous years.

Results in the early years and Key Stage 1 have also improved since the last inspection but not always consistently. In the summer of 2015, they were still below the national averages in reading and writing. On the basis of its regular progress meetings, the school is confident that pupils in Key Stage 1 will reach or exceed the national averages by summer 2016. The target for the proportion of children reaching a good level of progress in the early years has been raised to be in line with last year's national target. There is further work to be done to ensure that children are on track to reach those targets.

The pupils from Year 1 who were heard reading did so with a fair degree of fluency. They had developed clear strategies for deciphering words with which they were unfamiliar. The work in pupils' books and in the displays around the school shows that, as they progress through the school, pupils are developing increasing command of grammar and spelling and are able to enliven their writing through an extensive range of imagery and vocabulary. They are also making clear progress in their mathematics work. However, the presentation in mathematics is not consistently good and, in some instances, this detracts from pupils' ability to perform calculations accurately. The pupils who spoke to me were very keen to display their increasing command of spelling and mental arithmetic.

### **External support**

The school continues to receive well-coordinated support from the advisers from the local authority and the diocese. With the clear improvements that have been made in leadership and governance, this has been appropriately reduced. The nature of the support is now determined and commissioned by the senior leaders.

### **Priorities for further development**

Produce clear milestones to check that children in the early years are on track to achieve the higher targets that have been set for them.