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7 March 2008

Mrs Gillian Coffey  
Acting Headteacher  
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School  
Montacute Road  
Morden  
SM4 6RL

Dear Mrs Coffey

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Christopher Grove, Additional Inspector and Liz Pike, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27 and 28 February 2008. I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Archdiocese of Southwark and the Head of School Improvement for Merton.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 27 and 28 February 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher. Meetings were also held with senior staff and other teachers, groups of pupils, representatives from the governing body including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

Since the inspection when the St Teresa's Catholic Primary was judged to require special measures, significant changes have occurred to the leadership of the school. The governing body resigned and have since been replaced with a newly constituted governing body. The headteacher has been absent and her post has been covered by acting headteachers. This position has now been secured with the very recent appointment of an acting headteacher who is a National Leader in Education. Other staff changes include one of the reception class teachers who has been replaced by a long term supply teacher.

### Achievement and standards

Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in the focus on raising standards in English and mathematics. This is because planning for English lessons, in particular, now more frequently includes work for pupils that is matched to the different levels of their prior attainment. This development, which is still at an early stage, is enabling more pupils to make better progress in lessons. There is, however, scope for this to be improved further by providing greater challenge, especially for more able pupils.

There has been a greater focus on achievement in English and mathematics than in science. Consequently, improvement in pupils' achievement in science remains an important area to be addressed. There is not yet enough consistency in expectations of pupils in science. Some pupils are getting better opportunities than others to undertake investigations in ways which challenge their thinking and ability to explain their observations, and to record and present their new learning in effective ways.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2007:

- Raise standards in English and science and ensure greater consistency in standards in mathematics by matching work more closely to pupils' needs and challenging able pupils more effectively so that they make better progress – satisfactory

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils speak with enthusiasm and confidence about their school and the adults who look after them. They report that some of the changes since the inspection, such as 'leads in' and 'leads out' in literacy lessons as well as self-assessment in a range of lessons, help them to achieve better. This is a positive development as pupils' basic skills of numeracy and literacy are not developed well enough. Pupils' behaviour is good and they respond well in class especially when the pace of the lesson is brisk. They enjoy socialising with their classmates during break-times and say they feel safe and secure at school. Pupils like taking responsibility; this was seen when they presented a whole-school assembly during the visit and when they talked about the school council. Pupils have the capacity to take on more responsibilities and there is more that can be done to reflect the multi-cultural nature of the school in order to enhance pupil's personal development further.

## Quality of provision

Since the inspection teachers have worked hard to review the elements of their teaching that will help them improve lessons and so improve pupils' learning. They have responded positively to changes that have been introduced and it was evident in lessons that staff are gaining in confidence. For example, towards the end of lessons, teachers are more regularly providing pupils with opportunities to assess the quality of their work. The effect is that pupils are being supported in making their own judgements about the extent of their progress. Other examples include using 'talking partners' and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. However, not all staff are as confident as others, and inconsistency is still a significant factor that needs to be resolved. Other issues remain, such as pupils sitting on the carpet for too long at the beginning of a lesson or teaching assistants, who might normally be working with an individual pupil, not being engaged with pupils during this time. As a result, improvements made in pupils' learning overall, whilst developing, are still limited and this is most evident in science.

Since the inspection, the LA has provided consultants to review the school's provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English and for those with learning difficulties. The school has taken some action stemming from their audits and advice. For example, by providing staff training and distributing assessment sheets for teachers to establish the stage of English acquisition that pupils are at. But, to date, there has been insufficient analysis of data and monitoring of provision to check the implementation and impact of the strategies on both groups of pupils. Whole-school planning in this area lacks detail, which limits its effectiveness as an improvement tool. During the inspection visit there was too much inconsistency in planning and too little differentiation to guarantee sustained progress for these pupils.

A satisfactory system has been developed to track pupils' academic development, and this better enables the school to gauge the progress of individual pupils term by term. However, this arrangement does not yet enable the school to ascertain average progress by each class, by whole year groups or by small groups, and thus to judge how well pupils as a whole are achieving. Improved arrangements have been made to set literacy and numeracy targets for each pupil, though this system is

still at an early stage of development. Pupils of all ages now have a better understanding of their current academic targets. They are confident to assess progress towards the achievement of their personal targets alongside the judgements of their teachers. The school has developed a clearer set of expectations with regard to marking pupils' work. This includes the recently introduced 'traffic light' arrangement where teachers assess how far pupils have understood and met the learning objective of each piece of work they are set. Pupils welcome the new agreed marking system that identifies particular kinds of mistake. In their marking, teachers are also beginning to point out to pupils the next steps in their learning. However, the school is not yet building sufficiently on this development to help pupils play a more active role in their own learning.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2007:

- Improve the quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and pupils who are learning English so that they make more sustained progress – inadequate
- Raise the quality of teaching so that a much greater proportion is good – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

Although the leadership and management of the school has suffered from instability since the school was inspected, the deputy headteacher has worked hard to ensure that the day to day running of the school has been maintained and in this she has been successful. She has also worked with two acting headteachers and the staff to help to turn the school's attention to a much needed plan for improvement and this has been achieved with the new school development plan. However, with the very recent appointment of the new acting headteacher, further work is now required to ensure that the school development plan is tightly focussed on the aim to improve the achievement of all pupils in school.

Work to improve the monitoring and evaluation of, for example, the new strategy for marking pupils' work, has begun. This is a positive start. Further monitoring is now required, with a clear focus on evaluating the impact of actions taken in terms of pupils' progress and the raising of standards. Much work has been undertaken to strengthen the leadership of the school. To ensure the governing body is able to monitor and evaluate the work of the school more effectively, new committees have been established and training is planned to ensure all governors have the skills required for their new roles. Governors, supported by the LA, have also held a meeting with parents and have plans for more meetings to improve the communication between home and school; the early signs are that this is appreciated by all concerned.

Leaders in school and all staff are positive; they are committed to working together as a team under the new leadership, to make the improvements required. Whilst there is now a greater understanding of what remains to be done and the timescale in which it has to be achieved, further development is required of subject leaders and managers to aid the raising of standards.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2007:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by establishing better links with governors and parents and setting the right priorities for improvement that will raise standards – satisfactory

### External support

The support provided by the local authority as detailed in its statement of action is well focussed on the areas for improvement and has been valued by the school. In particular, the local authority has been effective in helping to secure a new governing body and the recently appointed acting headteacher. Given that the overall leadership of the school is now secure, further work is to take place to refine the school's plan for improvement so that the pace of change is increased.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the school's focus to improve achievement and standards in science is consistent with that of English and mathematics
- Improve the sharing of good teaching with staff from within the school and from other schools so that consistency of better practice is ensured.