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13 January 2011

Miss Isobel Booler  
Associate Headteacher  
St Anne's RC Primary School  
Moss Bank  
Crumpsall  
Manchester  
M8 5AB

Dear Miss Booler

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of St Anne's RC Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 January 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Thank you also for facilitating discussions with representatives of the Interim Executive Board, the local authority and the diocese.

I noted changes to the senior leadership since the school was given a notice to improve. In the autumn term, you joined the school as associate headteacher; you will be leaving at half-term. The executive headteacher was recalled to her own school and arrangements are in place for another executive headteacher to lead the school from after the half-term break until the end of the current school year.

As a result of the inspection on 18 May 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Pupils' achievement in English has improved. In 2010, pupils' results in the national tests rose and were significantly above the national average. The present Year 6 pupils are not expected to reach quite such high standards. However, most of them are on course to reach the standard they should, given their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, and they are doing almost equally as well in writing as in reading. Nonetheless, underachievement in writing has not been eradicated. It is most evident in Years 4 and 5 where around half the pupils have fallen behind the level expected for their age.

Pupils' written work shows that they are given a good number of interesting writing tasks. In some classes, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and pupils have had few opportunities to write at length. Pupils' science books showed that pupils have sufficient opportunities for investigative work. However, in some classes teachers depend overly on worksheets that are not always matched well enough to the range of pupils' ability and attainment.

The lessons and pupils' work seen confirmed the associate headteacher's judgement that the bulk of teaching is now of good quality and some is outstanding. She is aware of a small amount of inadequate teaching and has taken steps to minimise its impact. Improvement is the result of helpful constructive feedback to teachers following observations of their lessons and scrutiny of their pupils' exercise books, along with intensive support where needed. Lessons are generally planned with appropriately high expectations for pupils' achievements, and activities are often adjusted for pupils of different abilities. At times, however, pupils do not learn effectively because work is pitched at an unrealistically high level for the age-group. Marking of pupils' work is generally thorough but its quality varies. The best is highly focused, gives pupils a clear indication of how to improve their performance, and sets achievable short-term targets. Sometimes, however, shortcomings are not followed up with sufficient rigour.

Despite considerable efforts by the Interim Executive Board, the local authority and the diocese, stability of leadership and management has not been achieved at headship level. At interview, the school was unable to appoint a substantive headteacher. The changes of leadership have been smoothed as much as possible and the school has made progress. However, without stable long-term arrangements for its leadership, the school remains vulnerable. The Interim Executive Board has ensured that the school meets its statutory duty in relation to community cohesion.

Improvement is evident at middle leadership level. Teachers with additional responsibilities are clear about their roles and responsibilities and enthusiastic to fulfil them. They feel empowered to contribute effectively to the drive for improvement and show the capacity to do so.

Greater rigour is evident in the arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and keeping track of their progress, though consistency is not yet assured across classes. Assessment information is used to match extra provision to pupils' individual needs.

Action has been taken to tackle the shortcomings in outdoor provision for Nursery and Reception. Resources have been improved. A canopy and additional storage facilities are to be constructed and the outdoor area extended.

Following the previous inspection the local authority produced a statement of the action it would take to support improvement in the school. This fulfilled

requirements. The local authority has provided effective support and advice which has contributed to the improvements noted above.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- By 31 December 2010 secure the stability and improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
  - in partnership with the local authority and the diocese, a substantive headteacher is appointed at the earliest opportunity
  - senior and middle leadership teams are established who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and share a commitment to secure the school's capacity for sustained improvement
  - monitoring and evaluation arrangements are rigorous, outcomes are clearly recorded and rapidly addressed with clear links made to the implementation of robust improvement planning
  - the interim executive board contributes effectively to setting the school's strategic direction and ensures statutory responsibilities are met, including the promotion of community cohesion.
- Raise attainment in writing and science by ensuring that:
  - activities are provided to increase pupils' eagerness to write in all subjects
  - there are regular planned opportunities for pupils to take part in practical investigations
  - pupils have plentiful opportunities to discuss their tasks, research information and then record their work independently.
- By 31 March 2011 improve the quality of teaching so that 80% is good or better by ensuring that;
  - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all lessons
  - assessment information is consistently used to adjust lesson planning and teaching so that work is precisely tailored to pupils' needs and abilities, in particular the more-able
  - marking clearly indicates to pupils how to improve their work.
- Make greater use of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area by ensuring that;
  - it is used continuously each day
  - sufficient resources are available so that children can choose activities for themselves in all areas of learning.