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4 July 2013

Mrs Roberta Blakemore  
Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey  
Wheatland Lane  
Wallasey  
Merseyside  
CH44 7ED

Dear Mrs Blakemore

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey**

Following my visit to St Joseph's Primary on 3 July 2013, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2013.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I met with you and the senior leadership team, four members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. I evaluated the local authority's statement for action and school documents that showed the impact of improvements you and the team have made thus far.

#### **Context**

Prior to the inspection, the headteacher gave her notice to retire at the end of the summer term. A new headteacher has been appointed and will start in September. The vice-chair of the governing body stepped down after the inspection due to work commitments.

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

After the inspection, senior leaders quickly brushed away the disappointment of the inspection judgements and galvanised staff to make the improvements needed to raise pupils' achievement. Through honest self-reflection, they identified additional things they needed to do to improve. They work well together as a team to tackle the issues identified by Ofsted. With help from the local authority assessment team, all teachers have now been

trained, for instance, in how to track pupils' progress and attainment electronically. They use the tracking in discussion with senior leaders in the termly pupil progress meetings to identify pupils making slower or faster than expected progress. As a result, senior leaders are better placed to identify staff training needs and staff are better placed to know which pupils they need to target to improve. There is a greater focus in teaching on planning lessons based on pupils' needs.

Senior leaders have made adjustments to the teaching of reading. Teaching assistants have been trained in how to use running records; pupils now read daily and change their books more frequently. These adjustments alongside changes made earlier in the year have resulted in increased attainment in reading and knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).

The school's action plan has been written by the local authority until the new headteacher starts. The plan covers all of the points for improvement identified in the inspection but it lacks detail and is not clear enough. As a result, it would be difficult to measure the success the actions have had on improving the school. Similarly, the plan does not always make clear how success will be measured. The local authority and school need to resubmit the plan and include a greater focus on raising pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2. Governance was judged to be inadequate at the inspection. This is no longer the case so the action plan may have less of a focus on actions to improve the work of the governing body. Governors have completed a skills audit to identify the knowledge and understanding of each governor and challenge senior leaders frequently on what they are doing to improve.

The local authority's statement of action clearly identifies how it will consult parents through meetings, newsletters and focus groups. It also identifies the resources needed to be allocated to tackle each of the points for improvement identified in the inspection.

As teaching and leadership are not yet good enough the school is in a fragile position and would not be a good training ground for a newly qualified teacher.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The local authority's action plan for the school is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wirral. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

**Her Majesty's Inspector**