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6 December 2013

Mr Stephen Dent  
Headteacher  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School  
Whitehouse Road  
Bircotes  
DN11 8EF

Dear Mr Dent

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Patrick's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. 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 October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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 that governors update the school improvement plan with clear actions and milestones for the next four terms.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, with representatives from the governing body and with advisers from the local authority and diocese. In these, we discussed the actions leaders have taken since the last inspection. I visited each class and spoke informally to pupils about their work. Leaders' records of monitoring the quality of planning and marking were scrutinised as well as information on current pupils' progress. I also looked at lesson observation documentation and the feedback you have given to teachers following your scrutiny of pupils' work. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

## **Context**

Following the school's section 5 inspection in October 2013 the headteacher tendered his resignation to the governing body. This was accepted, and the diocese has made arrangements for the headteacher of another local diocesan primary school to act as interim headteacher for the Spring term. Governors are consulting with the diocese and the local authority about long-term arrangements for the leadership of the school.

## **Main findings**

You have worked closely with the local authority to write an action plan for this term that will build upon the process of school improvement already evident in the school. This plan has detailed, appropriate success criteria for the full academic year, by which governors will be able to hold school leaders to account for the progress pupils make. Targets for the progress pupils should make are established for each class and are also built into all teachers' performance management for the year. These targets establish the long-term expectations needed to ensure the school continues to improve quickly, during a period of leadership transition. Whilst the process for monitoring improvements is planned to continue, details of the actions leaders will take to improve the school beyond this period have not yet been agreed. Governors have made plans to work with the interim leadership of the school and the diocese to establish a longer-term view of school improvement.

You have put in place appropriate support for teachers, particularly in making improvements to the quality of lesson planning. You are monitoring this regularly and your records show that it is beginning to have an impact on improving the level of challenge in the work that is set in lessons. However, this is still inconsistent across teaching staff. You are monitoring improvements to the quality of teaching and your practice now has a sharper focus on the areas of development for individual teachers. Your observations show that teachers are making changes to how they deliver their lessons, for example by planning greater opportunities for pupils to work independently. However, these observations do not sharply focus on the progress pupils make and in particular, the progress made by groups of pupils with differing abilities.

The deputy headteacher has worked with the local authority adviser to write an action plan for improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The new phonics programme, introduced in September, has continued across the school. While leaders say this is having an impact, the quality of the sessions has not been evaluated by the literacy leader. A review of the progress pupils are making is scheduled to happen before the end of term.

Governors continue to provide a high level of support and challenge to the school. They have independently sought a review of governance from a National Leader of Governance and are in the process of evaluating the skills they have to perform their

role effectively. The Chair and Vice-chair of the Governing Body have started an extensive training course with the National College for Teaching and Leadership. They are committed to ensuring rapid improvement and to securing the long-term leadership of the school.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. To this end, I intend to return to the school next term in order to review improvements to the quality of teaching and school leadership.

### **External support**

School leaders have been ably supported by the local authority and the diocese. The local authority has provided effective advice to the headteacher and has established clear, appropriate targets by which the school and individual teachers can be held to account over this academic year. These targets are based on an accurate assessment of pupils' achievement across reading, writing and mathematics. The diocese has established a network of support for the school that has enabled school leaders to draw on good practice elsewhere, for example in planning lessons. In addition, the diocesan adviser has acted quickly to secure the interim leadership of the school. Local authority and diocesan advisers are working closely with governors to review the school's leadership in the longer-term.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire and the Director of Schools for the Diocese of Hallam.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**