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21 January 2016

Mrs Jayne McQuillan  
Headteacher  
St Edward's Catholic Primary School  
Newhall Road  
Swadlincote  
DE11 0BD

Dear Mrs McQuillan

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

Following my visit to your school on 12 and 13 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 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 May 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement which 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 not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is 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 Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2015

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the early years provision, so that it is at least good, by:
  - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - directing teachers to use their information about pupils' achievements more precisely to plan work that is suitably challenging for the most-able pupils as well as provide a more consistent level of support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
  - making sure that teachers check more closely on pupils' understanding during lessons, thereby moving learning forward more quickly for those who are doing well and providing more structured support to those who are finding the work difficult
  - checking teachers' marking provides clear guidance to all pupils so they can quickly make necessary improvements to their work
  - developing adults' skills in the teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and sounds)
  - ensuring that teachers place an increased focus upon the teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling
  - improving the accuracy of assessment in each area of learning in the early years to enable suitable activities to be planned for children to move their learning forward more quickly
  - making sure that children have enough suitable opportunities to learn outdoors as well as indoors in the early years.
  
- Raise pupils' achievement by the end of Key Stage 2:
  - providing pupils with more activities to enable them to develop their skills in problem solving and their ability to reason
  - making sure that handwriting is taught more systematically across the school and that teachers raise their expectations of the quality of pupils' presentation of their work
  - raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils by making better use of the pupil premium funding
  - accelerating boys' progress so that it is similar to that made by girls across the school

- ensuring that all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning during lessons through listening carefully to teachers' presentation of learning and introductions and that a closer eye is kept on their work rate.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
  - introducing routine checks so that governors and senior leaders track the progress of the different prior attaining groups of pupils so that underachievement can be identified and appropriate actions taken to secure good progress
  - drawing together more sharply information about the quality of teaching across the school, including in the early years, to provide staff with clear guidance on how to improve, and ensuring that this is followed up with regular and detailed feedback
  - providing staff with clear guidance on how to use information from their assessments to inform their teaching
  - ensuring that subject leaders are more closely involved in checking on teaching in their areas of responsibility and in driving and securing improvement to provision and outcomes
  - ensuring governors check more closely on the extent to which leaders' actions are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements
  - making sure that the systems for the performance management of all staff are robust and that the policy is followed in relation to rewarding teachers.

External reviews of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 January 2016**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and your assistant headteacher, three subject leaders, a group of pupils, three representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day. I observed teaching in all classes and looked at work in pupils' books. I considered documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching and reviewed your most recent information on pupils' progress and attainment. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plans were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, one teacher has left the school and been replaced. One new parent governor has been appointed. The early years leader has been absent from school since October 2015. This post is currently being covered on a supply basis.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The most recent national assessments in 2015, which have yet to be validated, show that standards at the end of Year 6 declined to below average overall. The school's most recent information on pupils' progress and attainment confirm that significant gaps remain between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others, as well as between boys and girls, as reported when the school was placed in special measures in May 2015. This reflects the significant weaknesses that remain in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Pupils' work, learning and progress over time in many classes are too slow. The quality of some pupils' work as seen in their books is weak and teachers' assessments are sometimes too generous. Many pupils are capable of achieving higher standards and making faster progress but are not doing so because the teaching over time is not ambitious enough.

Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work confirm that they are taught different types of writing and write in a range of subjects. However, pieces of writing are frequently only short. Some pupils' poor basic skills such as spelling, grammar and punctuation limit their progress. Evidence in pupils' workbooks sampled during the inspection indicates that most pupils are making expected progress in mathematics but not enough are making good progress to date.

The impact of improvements to the teaching of phonics is not evident in lessons. In Year 1, the teacher's weak subject knowledge in the teaching of phonics means that many errors are not corrected and as a result, pupils are confused and hindered in their learning.

The school has begun to put procedures in place to tackle underachievement but, as yet, they are not consistently applied and do not hold teachers rigorously to account for the progress pupils are making. Consequently, they are not having a strong enough impact on raising achievement. The progress pupils made in lessons during the monitoring visit was inconsistent.

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

The quality of teaching and learning remains uneven across the school. Teaching is not improving fast enough to move pupils' learning on at the pace that is required. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to bring about improvement but the impact of these new developments remains inconsistent because too much inadequate practice remains.

In many classes, expectations are too low. Frequently, teachers' planning takes little account of pupils' prior learning and focuses too much on the tasks the pupils are to complete without connecting these closely enough to what they will learn. Consequently, even though pupils complete activities, they do not make the progress they could and often lose interest. Where teaching promotes better progress, for example in Year 5, pupils are becoming more enthusiastic learners. This is because the teacher is meeting their needs better through using the information she has about them to plan lessons that are pitched at the right level and skilfully intervenes to challenge pupils and move their learning on.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class remains inadequate. Staff do not have a deep enough understanding of how young children learn and develop. Consequently, they do not plan an appropriate play-based curriculum which focuses on children's interests and children are not challenged to achieve well. Children often wander from one activity to another with no clear focus or purpose for their learning. Staff do not talk to children regularly about their learning or support them to think, justify and explain their understanding in order to take the next steps. Systems to assess and monitor how well children's skills are improving are not robust, are over generous and are not used effectively to inform planning or next steps for individual children. The outdoor learning area is insufficiently used to support children to make good progress. Children are not developing positive attitudes to learning to take forward into Year 1.

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

Around the school, pupils are generally polite and courteous. They understand that many changes are being made to improve their education and are keen to play their part. Pupils have a good awareness of the sanctions and rewards in place and particularly like the 'marvellous me' initiative.

In some lessons, pupils cooperate well together and are beginning to demonstrate an improving attitude to learning. However, in too many classes the pupils' attitudes

to learning are not good enough. This is sometimes because the work does not capture their interests or because pupils have established poor working skills in previous years. This leads to low-level disruptive behaviour such as fidgeting, daydreaming, swinging on chairs and off-task chatting.

Pupils' behaviour is typically compliant. For example, in assembly pupils folded their arms and sat up smartly when an adult asked them to, but they were not engaged and many pupils became restless because the presentation was too long, dull and inappropriate for younger pupils.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leaders and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what constitutes good leadership and teaching. As a result, the teaching and outcomes for pupils are not improving fast enough.

There is insufficient urgency and drive from the headteacher in tackling the areas for improvement. Senior leaders do not demonstrate that they have the necessary capacity to influence or drive the improvements that are urgently needed. The learning deficiencies are deep rooted and, despite some initial successes, there is significant work still to do. Leaders are unable to convey the urgency of the improvements needed and gain consistent implementation by staff. Senior leaders have not been robust enough in checking whether actions which have been agreed are happening in all classes. Consequently, the school is not improving quickly enough.

The review of the management of the pupil premium has taken place. Currently, it is not apparent whether this is having any impact because an action plan has not been produced in response to this.

Governors have acted swiftly to implement the recommendations following the review of governance. As a result, they have an increased understanding of their role, are better informed about the work of the school and are becoming increasingly effective. They spend time in school to see for themselves what is happening 'on the ground' and analyse information about pupils' progress more carefully. As a result, governors are better able to ask the right sort of questions and can see that pupils' achievement is not improving quickly enough.

Safeguarding documents were checked during the monitoring visit and meet current requirements.

## **External support**

The school is receiving extensive support from the local authority. The senior link adviser makes regular visits to the school and these are helpful in reinforcing key messages. However, this is not always being followed through in a sufficiently coherent or rigorous way by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. The school is very heavily dependent on external support in almost all aspects of its work.