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23 June 2008

Mr P Sell  
The Headteacher  
Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School  
Occupation Road  
Corby  
Northamptonshire  
NN17 1EE

Dear Mr Sell

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF OUR LADY OF  
WALSINGHAM CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Suzanne Gerred, Additional Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 June 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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 Director of the Children and Young People's Service for Northamptonshire and the Director of Education for the Catholic Diocese of Northampton.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 11 and 12 June 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the teachers, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority (LA).

### Context

The school continues to experience staffing instability. Two teachers, one of whom is the deputy headteacher, will be leaving this term. The learning mentor is now employed full time. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen since the inspection and is presently 18% of the cohort.

### Achievement and standards

Children enter the Reception class in most years with skills that broadly meet national expectations. However, detailed assessment has identified that the proportion of children with skills that are below national expectations in communication, language and literacy and in numeracy was greater than average on entry this year. They are making good progress and the proportion of children that reach the expected goals for learning at the end of Reception is average.

Since the last monitoring visit, pupils in Key Stage 2 have made good progress in English so that the gap between school standards and the average has narrowed considerably. School information and pupils' work show that standards are in line with national expectations and pupils in Year 6 are well placed to achieve average standards at the end of the year. In Key Stage 1 progress is satisfactory. It is not sufficiently rapid in the present Year 2 to ensure standards rise and they remain below average this year.

Progress in mathematics is better than in previous years because of a general improvement in teaching. However, the school has prioritised improvements to English and less attention has been paid to mathematics lessons. Consequently, pupil progress has been inconsistent across the school. Standards are in line with national expectations in Years 3 and 4 and broadly average in Year 2. However, in Years 5 and 6 standards remain below national expectations because progress has been insufficient to narrow the gap between the school's standards and the average.

Provision for science is beginning to improve but, at the time of this monitoring inspection, the school is unable to demonstrate that it has had an impact on pupil progress which remains too slow. In Year 6, pupils have made rapid progress recently, but this has only ensured that the attainment gap does not widen and standards remain below national expectations.

The progress of more able pupils continues to accelerate because teachers are better equipped to use assessment information to plan appropriate activities for them. In Year 4 more able pupils are now making faster progress than their peers. However, in Years 5 and 6 pupils are unlikely to achieve the targets the school has set for high achievers. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make progress in English and mathematics that is in line with their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making at least satisfactory progress because of the school's increasing expertise at tailoring provision to meet their needs.

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

- make more effective use of assessment information to increase the rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 and to raise standards particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

### Personal development and well-being

Behaviour in lessons and around the school continues to be good. Where teaching is outstanding pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils are able to demonstrate an extremely mature attitude to their own learning and a high degree of independence. Their enjoyment of school is increasing. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the widening range of school clubs and enriching opportunities provided by the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for the community are increasing to a satisfactory level. The school council is now well established, providing a forum for pupils to express their views and to contribute to the school community, such as the development of the 'memorial garden'. Pupils also make an appropriate contribution to the wider community, for example by raising funds for charities such as the well and water pump in the Gambia.

### Quality of provision

Teaching is satisfactory overall. The proportion of good teaching is accelerating, particularly in English, where there are some outstanding features. However, many staff changes over the past year have meant that the school has not yet been able to reach the challenging target of 70% good teaching. There is a much better match of work to the abilities of different groups of pupils, particularly in English. However, in science and mathematics the match is inconsistent. There are still too many lessons where all pupils are set the same tasks and where expectations of the most able are not high enough.

Where teaching is outstanding an excellent use is made of the assessment of pupils' prior attainment so that work is finely tuned to match their wide ranging abilities and needs. Constant reference to pupils' targets is skilfully woven into lessons so that pupils work towards them in their daily tasks. As a result, all pupils are challenged at the correct levels.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last visit. Children enjoy the imaginative range of activities the Reception team prepare for them which have enabled them to make good progress this year. The curriculum for English is developing well with a much greater emphasis on basic skills in reading

and writing. Homework provision has improved since the last visit. It is used consistently to enhance school work and is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, particularly towards English and mathematics lessons.

Since the last monitoring visit, pupils in all classes have a much better knowledge and understanding of their targets in English and mathematics. Marking in English is now good, with pupils getting regular detailed advice on how to make improvements in their work which is clearly linked to individual targets. However, in other subjects, particularly in mathematics and science, there is inconsistency in the amount of guidance they are given. As a result, pupils do not always know how well they have done or what to improve. Marking rarely refers to pupils' targets in these subjects.

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

- ensure that teachers provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the more able – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong leadership. He has established a school team that is now demonstrating a shared determination and greater capacity to improve teaching and learning. The school now offers pupils a more stimulating learning environment with many good features, for example the well run school library and improved resources for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Imaginative initiatives have been implemented to aid improvements in teaching which are beginning to bear fruit. One example is the Catholic Schools Partnership which is helping to share good practice. Performance management procedures are now effective in holding teachers to account for the progress of their pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. Embedded improvements in teaching and improvements in leadership mean that the school is creating firm foundations for future success. However, staffing instability, which is likely to continue until the end of autumn 2008, is a cause of concern.

Subject leaders are now having a greater impact on teaching and learning. This is particularly so in English. Leaders have devised effective action plans and check the lessons to ensure that agreed changes to teaching are being implemented. They are better able to challenge colleagues to secure consistency across the school. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and of inclusion continues to strengthen so that children have a good start in school and different groups are now well cared for. In mathematics, leadership has been less strong and improvements to provision have been inconsistent.

Governance continues to strengthen and governors are making a valuable contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. For example, governors recently conducted interviews with pupils.

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

- strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that teaching and learning are monitored more effectively and by taking swift action to tackle underachievement – satisfactory

- meet statutory requirements in providing teachers with targets and guidance on how they can improve – satisfactory.

### External support

Teachers continue to benefit from the skilled support of local authority subject consultants. The local authority School Improvement Partner and the diocese provide appropriate levels of support and challenge to the school and, in particular, the headteacher. The school also appreciates the support of an associate headteacher who has done some effective work to develop the role of subject leaders.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen the leadership and provision for mathematics to ensure that pupils make good progress and standards rise.
- Ensure that pupils in Key Stage1 are making more rapid progress so that more pupils attain expected standards.
- Stabilise the teaching team in order to ensure that satisfactory progress to date continues and the proportion of good teaching rises.