

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Special Measures

What does it mean to be placed into 'Special Measures'?

The term 'Special measures' is a term used by Ofsted following inspections and refers to the need for the school to receive additional, external support in order to secure the required improvements.

What do Ofsted say the school is doing well?

- Effective systems and procedures in place to safeguard pupils
- Transition arrangements from Y6 to Y7 are well managed and effective
- The school has made progress in improving attendance which is now at the national average
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school

What do Ofsted say needs to improve?

- Monitoring and evaluation of performance by school leaders
- Examination results at GCSE
- Progress of most able
- Progress of disadvantaged pupils
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Behaviour of a minority of pupils

What has been done already to work towards these improvements?

- A review of the school's provision for pupils in receipt of pupil premium has already been carried out [December 2017] and the areas highlighted for improvement have been identified in an action plan.
- The school has secured the support of St Patrick's RC High School, Salford [see below] in order to support improvements in leadership and teaching and learning
- Y7 catch-up literacy and numeracy programme being delivered
- The decision has been made that an Interim Executive Board will be installed to oversee the governance of the school. The IEB is a group of experienced leaders in education who will work closely with the leadership of the school in order to challenge and support them in securing the required improvements.

What help will the school receive from outside agencies?

The school will work closely with St Patrick's RC High School, the local authority and the Diocese of Salford. St Patrick's is a National Teaching School and is judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding'. It has a great deal of experience in working with schools such as St Matthew's and has an impressive record of success in supporting schools in making sustained improvements.

What differences will my child notice?

The day to day experience of pupils is unlikely to change in terms of structure and procedures. However, in lessons pupils will notice increased levels of challenge and demand. They may also see more visitors in classes and around school involved in scrutinising and evaluating teaching and learning. The impact of all the strategies that are being put in place is aimed at enhancing provision and improving outcomes for all pupils.

What will parents/carers notice is different?

The school will have a new group of governors [IEB] who will provide an enhanced level of challenge and support to the leadership of the school. The school will have regular monitoring visits from Ofsted and their findings will be shared with parents/carers. There will be an increased focus on attendance and behaviour as we address some of the issues raised by the report.

What can parents/carers do to help?

Parents/carers can help by continuing to help and support their child in working hard at school and at home. By continuing to support the school's efforts to improve attendance and punctuality parents/carers are contributing directly to improving outcomes. It will also be helpful for parents/carers to be positive with their children about what the school is doing and the steps being taken to secure improvements.

The last report was 'Requires Improvement'. I am worried that in the last two years the school has gone down rather than up.

It is a huge disappointment to all involved with the school that, over the last two years, outcomes have not improved. With the help and support of its partners the school will be doing all it can to ensure improved outcomes this year and in the future. All involved are confident that, with the additional support provided by St Patrick's, the required improvements can, and will, be made.

Will the school receive more money for being placed in 'Special Measures'?

Not directly. However, it will now be possible for bids to be made to the Department for Education on behalf of the school in order to secure funding to finance support programmes. Preliminary work on submitting a substantial bid is already underway.

Will this mean the school is forced to become an academy?

At the moment there are no plans for the school to become an academy. However, at some point in the future the IEB in consultation with the diocese, parents and other stakeholders may feel that it is in the best interest of the school to become an academy.

How will the school come out of 'Special Measures'?

Over the coming months regular monitoring visits will take place conducted by an inspector who will consider the progress the school is making in addressing the areas for improvement. At some point in the future the school will again be inspected and a judgement made about provision and outcomes. If the required improvements have been made the school will no longer be subject to special measures.

How often will the school be visited by inspectors in the future?

We anticipate inspectors visiting the school at least twice within each school year.

Will teachers leave? What is being done to recruit good teachers?

Every year some teachers leave the school for a variety of reasons. Teachers at St Matthew's are committed to their job and are passionate about improving provision and outcomes for our pupils. We do not anticipate that the school being placed in 'special measures' will have an impact on retaining our staff. The school will continue to pursue a proactive recruitment strategy aimed at securing the best teachers. Working closely with St Patrick's Teaching School we will be able to offer the very best induction and training for teachers new to the profession and those seeking to develop their career and broaden their experience.

Although the report was very disappointing the school is confident that the outlook for the future is very positive. The additional support and regular monitoring that will be provided will help to ensure that rapid progress will be made. All staff at the school are determined to do all they can to secure the required improvements. I ask that parents continue to support the school in every way they can as the future success of the school is heavily reliant on a close and effective home/school partnership.