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13 May 2019

Mrs Claire Gurden  
Headteacher  
Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Primary School  
Fir Grove  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire  
SK11 7SF

Dear Mrs Gurden

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 April 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in May 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held meetings to discuss the school's improvement with you and other leaders, with members of the interim executive board (IEB), with a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. I toured the school, accompanied by you, to observe the learning that was taking place. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action, which incorporated the school's improvement plan. I examined other documents, including the single central record and the schools' own information about current pupils' achievements. I looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and on display. I also scrutinised the review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding, completed since the previous inspection, and reviews of the school's performance provided by external consultants.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the governing body has been replaced by an IEB. Members of the IEB are highly skilled professionals from a variety of backgrounds, including education. Representatives of the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Anglican Diocese of Chester are also members of the IEB. The deputy headteacher has left the school and plans are in place to appoint an assistant headteacher to take up post in September 2019.

Other teachers have left the school and have been replaced by new members of staff, some of whom are relatively new to the profession. A decision regarding the school becoming an academy has yet to be made.

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

You, members of the IEB and other leaders provide the school with dedicated and determined leadership. Working together, you are all resolute in a strong desire to remove the school from serious weaknesses. There is a clear and honest understanding of where the school has already improved and what still needs to be done. The school's improvement plan, included in the local authority's statement of action, identified key issues for the school to address. These key issues are securely aligned to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Lines of accountability are clear, and you and other leaders carefully check that improvements are happening as expected.

The new assessment system which was in place at the last inspection is now embedded. Teachers are held more accountable for the progress that pupils in their class make. Pupils' progress meetings are more frequent and teachers carefully analyse the progress that different groups of pupils are making. However, they do not analyse which groups are performing better than others and why.

To ensure that pupils are provided with activities that are challenging and engaging you now keep a much closer eye on the quality of teaching. This is done in a variety of ways such as formal lesson observations, learning walks and scrutiny of books. However, the feedback given to teachers after observations of their practice does not consistently focus sharply enough on the progress and learning of different groups of pupils. Performance management procedures for teachers are effective. However, there are no clear lines of accountability in place to show the valuable contribution that teaching assistants make to improving outcomes for pupils.

As a result of swift action taken by leaders, outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1 improved significantly in 2018. For example, the proportions of those reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with or above the national average. Particularly noteworthy is the proportion of pupils who reached greater depth in each of these subjects, which was well above the national average, most notably in reading and mathematics. You and other

leaders were, however, particularly concerned about outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 and in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. You took immediate action to address these issues. As a result of additional training by external consultants, including a national leader in education, pupils are now making stronger progress in phonics and outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are improving. The challenge for the school is to ensure that these improving outcomes are sustained to the end of the academic year and beyond.

Leaders have taken a structured approach to developing subjects in the wider curriculum. Since the previous inspection there has been a key focus on developing pupils' skills and subject knowledge in history, geography and physical education. This approach has been successful and is reflected in the work seen in pupils' books. Pupils talked to me in depth about their learning in history and geography. Middle leaders and external providers have trained teachers in all of these subjects. In addition, in their areas of responsibility, middle leaders monitor the progress that pupils are making in developing their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. At this time, the middle leadership of other subjects in the wider curriculum, such as art and design and design technology, is not as well developed.

Behaviour has improved significantly. There is now a consistent approach to behaviour management. Touring the school, I observed pupils who were, overall, well behaved and actively involved in their learning. Teachers now provide pupils with activities which are engaging and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils that I spoke to confirmed that behaviour has improved and that learning is more exciting and fun. They talked about the good levels of support they receive from teaching assistants.

A timely review has been completed of the school's use of the pupil premium funding. Leaders have been keen to learn from and act on the recommendations provided. Consequently, an action plan has been put in place to improve this aspect of the school's performance. For example, plans are in place to purchase software which will allow the school to identify with greater accuracy pupils that are entitled to the pupil premium grant, thereby increasing the amount of pupil premium funding the school receives. Staff have also received additional training to ensure that their teaching is more specifically targeted to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school are improving.

Better use is being made of the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Systems to monitor the progress that pupils with SEND make have been revised. Targets set are much more precise. Consequently, teaching is more succinctly targeted to meet the needs of these pupils and outcomes are also improving.

Leaders are acutely aware that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is stubbornly below the national

average. Following the previous inspection, the learning environment has been enhanced and additional resources have been purchased. Activities provided in independent play areas are now more challenging. However, ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils achieve a good level of development remains a priority for further improvement.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They would happily disclose any worries to members of staff. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Staff feel valued and work well as a team. They typically commented: 'I look forward to coming into work every day.'

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, the director of education for the Diocese of Chester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**