

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 March 2020

Mrs Brenda Schouller
Headteacher
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School
Gladys Avenue
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO2 9AX

Dear Mrs Schouller

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Krista Dawkins and Kate Redford, Ofsted inspectors, to your school on 10–11 March 2020, 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 June 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Catholic diocese of Portsmouth, the regional school's commissioner and the director of children's services for Portsmouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Shazia Akram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2019.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve safeguarding procedures, including in early years, by ensuring that:
 - all staff read the statutory guidance (Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019) and receive training to help them understand and apply this guidance
 - at least one member of a recruitment panel has received training in safer recruitment
 - the single central register of recruitment checks complies with statutory requirements
 - all staff know whom to refer to with any concerns about pupils' welfare
 - break and lunchtime supervision is effective so that pupils play safely and are considerate of others.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - governors fulfil their statutory duties, especially with regard to safeguarding
 - leaders have clear roles and responsibilities that are understood by all staff
 - weak teaching is tackled quickly and effectively
 - records relating to pupils' behaviour are kept accurately
 - the curriculum is reviewed to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills build sequentially in all subject areas.
- Improve the quality of teaching to enable pupils to make stronger progress throughout the school by:
 - using assessment accurately so that any gaps in pupils' learning are filled and pupils who fall behind are quickly helped to catch up
 - planning work that challenges pupils, especially the most able, so that they think deeply and try hard
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge, especially in mathematics
 - checking that additional teaching for pupils with SEND helps them to make good progress from their starting points.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 10 to 11 March 2020

Evidence

We met with: the headteacher and senior leaders; curriculum leaders; groups of pupils; groups of staff; governors, including the chair of governors; the deputy director of children's services and a representative from the local authority. We listened to a group of pupils read. We conducted joint lesson visits with the leaders and looked at work in pupils' books. We spoke on the telephone with a representative from the Catholic diocese of Portsmouth. We evaluated a range of documents related to the school's provision, including self-evaluation, curriculum and improvement planning, governance and safeguarding. We checked the school's single central record, staff training register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been a large number of staff changes. Most teachers started in September 2019. There have not been any changes to the leadership team. The special educational needs coordinator took up her post in February 2020. A deputy headteacher works on a secondment basis for two days a week. Work with external consultants and leaders from other schools has been brokered by the local authority. The local authority is working with the diocese and the regional school's commissioner to identify a suitable academy sponsor.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

Leaders and governors have addressed some of the weaknesses identified during the inspection in June 2019. For example, leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are robust and that all behaviour incidents are recorded accurately. However, they have not acted with a sense of urgency to ensure other areas improve as swiftly. Many aspects of the quality of education are weak. Importantly, some areas, such as phonics, have declined further. The school is not on track to be removed from serious weaknesses.

Leaders have not yet ensured that the curriculum is planned well enough to build pupils' knowledge over time. Teachers do not have the subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum as intended. For instance, in mathematics, teaching is not planned to help pupils to remember more. In too many lessons, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), complete a series of disjointed activities. Teachers are still not checking to make sure pupils' misconceptions are addressed effectively. They do not use assessment information to plan and close gaps in pupils' learning. Therefore, most pupils, particularly those with SEND, do not learn as well as they could. Leaders have not ensured that pupils learn the important knowledge and skills across all subjects to help them achieve well.

Behaviour in lessons remains variable. In too many lessons, pupils are easily distracted. This is because the work they do in most subjects does not engage them and help them learn well.

Leaders have not made sure there is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Most staff have not had the right training. The books that pupils are given to read do not always match the sounds that they are taught. As a result, most pupils in key stage 1, particularly those with SEND, are not able to read well enough. This further impedes their access to the whole curriculum.

The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school

The school's improvement plan lacks precision. Leaders' aspirations for what staff and pupils can achieve are too low. Staff remain unclear about leaders' roles and responsibilities. Governors do not have an accurate oversight of the quality of education for all pupils. They have been too slow to identify and make effective use of external support.

Leaders and governors make sure that all safeguarding checks are carried out prior to staff taking up their posts. They ensure that all staff are eligible to work with children. Staff and governors have received training and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. The local authority has contributed to work in this area well. Staff refer their safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. Leaders take appropriate and swift action to ensure pupils and their families receive support when needed. There is a strong culture of vigilance.

The head of school has made sure that staff apply behaviour management procedures consistently. Records show that staff and leaders ensure pupils' pastoral and emotional needs are met effectively. Senior leaders regularly examine behaviour records. All incidents of poor behaviour are addressed promptly.

Most pupils who spoke to us told us that they feel safe in school. They trust and know that staff will act quickly to address their concerns. Pupils told us that there is some bullying, but staff deal with it straight away.

Many parents who spoke to us told us that their children feel safe and happy at school. The family worker works well with pupils and their families to offer support and advice. Some parents who spoke to us told us that they appreciate the help they receive to address the additional needs of their children.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders and governors have made sure that safeguarding practice and procedures are effective. The single central record is compliant with statutory requirements.

- Leaders have successfully ensured that all behaviour incidents are recorded and addressed effectively.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders' plans and actions to address areas of weakness lack clarity and precision. Leaders and governors have not taken swift and robust action towards the removal of serious weaknesses. This includes external support to make sure that governance is effective.
- Leaders and governors have not made sure that the quality of education improves rapidly enough. Pupils, including those with SEND, do not learn and achieve as well as they should and could.
- The curriculum is not coherent and well sequenced. Leaders have not made sure that the training and support teachers receive help develop their subject knowledge and expertise. Leaders have not developed staff's skills in using assessment information to identify and address pupils' misconceptions.
- Although the staffing structure has been reviewed recently, most staff remain unclear about leaders' roles and responsibilities.
- Governors acknowledge that they have been too accepting of what leaders tell them about the quality of education. They have not posed enough challenge to check and ensure improvements are robust. Their self-evaluation of the school's strengths is overly generous.

External support

The local authority has led training for leaders, governors and staff to address weaknesses in safeguarding effectively. The local authority has also brokered some external support to address weaknesses in the quality of education. However, the support provided by leaders from other schools and external consultants has not had a high enough impact on improvements.

Additional priority for further improvement

- There are key weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. As a result, most pupils are unable to read as well as they could and should. Leaders must implement a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. They should also ensure that the texts pupils read should provide them with opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge.