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10 March 2021

Clare Roberts  
Headteacher  
Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School  
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Liverpool  
L30 2NR

Dear Mrs Roberts

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Paul Tomkow, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on the 10 and 11 of February 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require special measures.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that curriculum plans for subjects other than English and mathematics carefully sequence the knowledge that you want pupils to know and remember from the early years to Year 6.

### **Context**

- A period of considerable turbulence followed the last inspection. There have been many changes in staffing at all levels across the school. A new governing body was appointed by the Archdiocese of Liverpool in the autumn term 2020. The current deputy headteacher took up his post in September 2020. You joined the school in January 2021.
- During the autumn term 2020, almost every pupil worked from home for a short period of time. Children in the Reception class 'bubble' had to self-isolate at home on two separate occasions.
- At the time of the inspection, approximately a quarter of the pupils were being educated on site. This included almost all of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and the most vulnerable pupils. The very small proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan were being supported at home.

### **Main findings**

- During the autumn term 2020, leaders focused on bringing stability to the school. Since your appointment, you have further strengthened relationships at all levels. You have prioritised the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics from the early years to Year 6. Subject leaders have carefully sequenced the knowledge that they want pupils to gain in these subjects. They have ensured that staff have the knowledge and understanding that they need to deliver these curriculums more effectively. Subject leaders check that the curriculum is being taught as planned. Consequently, they now have a better understanding of what pupils are learning.
- The impact of previous instability in leadership, and the current pandemic, has slowed down the development of the curriculum for most subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently, curriculum plans are in their infancy. These plans do not sequence the knowledge that subject leaders want pupils to learn carefully enough. Staff have not had the training that they need to deliver the subject curriculums effectively.
- Pupils from early years to Year 6, whether they are in school or working at home, follow the school's usual curriculum for English and mathematics. Teachers check pupils' work to identify what pupils know and can do. This helps them to carefully plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers

provide additional support to help those vulnerable pupils who are struggling with their learning in these subjects.

- The special educational needs coordinator supports staff well to develop individualised learning plans to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This helps teachers to adapt their curriculum plans effectively. Leaders work well with other agencies. As a result, pupils continue to access the additional help that they need.
- During the COVID-19 restrictions, you have focused on pupils' physical and emotional well-being. For example, in physical education leaders have identified what can be delivered remotely. This is to make sure pupils remain fit and active, despite the current challenging circumstances that they face.
- The teaching of reading remains a priority, especially for vulnerable pupils. Teachers use the recorded phonics sessions that match the school's phonics programme to ensure that pupils at home and at school continue to develop their phonic knowledge. Older pupils at the early stages of reading also have access to these recorded materials. This is to help them catch up. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they know.
- Teachers record daily story sessions. They share the illustrations and printed text with pupils. This helps to regain pupils' love of reading for pleasure. Older pupils complete work from a range of appropriate tasks linked to the chosen class texts.
- Leaders have worked diligently to successfully rebuild and strengthen relationships with parents and carers. You and the staff provide additional support to vulnerable pupils and their families. You have worked well with other agencies and local charities to ensure that they have had the help that they need. Frequent checks reassure you that pupils are safe and well.
- The new governing body has received appropriate support from the local authority and the archdiocese. They are well placed to hold leaders to account for the quality of education on offer during the current circumstances. Governors are mindful of their role to provide support for you and your staff during the pandemic.
- Leaders at all levels have received intensive support from the local authority and archdiocese, particularly during the summer and autumn terms of 2020. The continued support from the English and mathematics hubs has contributed to the many improvements in the leadership of these subjects. This in turn has made a positive difference to the reading, writing and mathematics curriculums.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority and representatives from the archdiocese. We discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed documents relating to the school's curriculum and governance. We listened to pupils read and talked with a group of pupils from key stage 2 about their experiences of school. We looked at the eight responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including eight free-text responses, and the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**