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Richard Sanderson  
Executive Headteacher  
Christ The King Catholic School, Amesbury  
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Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP4 7LX

Dear Mr Sanderson

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Christ The King Catholic School, Amesbury**

Following my visit with Claire Mirams, Ofsted Inspector (OI) to your school on 26 and 27 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

**The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.**

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 26 May 2021 and 27 May 2021**

### **Context**

Christ The King Catholic School entered a formal collaboration with a local primary school in September 2020. As a result, the executive headteacher, director of curriculum and assessment, business manager, and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) from the partner school joined. They share their time between both schools. The head of school, who also joined in September 2020, is full time and completes the school's leadership team.

In September 2020, a strategic board of governance was set up across both schools to oversee the formal collaboration arrangement. This school also has its own local governing body who have full delegated responsibilities.

The inclusion manager has been absent since April 2021. Two other members of staff are absent. A member of staff with responsibility for the resource base (The Ark), which caters for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, joined in April 2021. A teacher with responsibility for pupils in Years 3 and 4, who started in April 2021, will leave at the end of term.

The school makes use of Ta-Dah, an alternative provider.

### **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

Leaders' actions to secure school improvement have not gained purchase until now. Although the school has improved in fits and starts, with ever-changing staffing arrangements, changes for the better have not stuck. Now, however, with a new leadership structure firmly in place and with the effective support of external partners, the pace of improvement is picking up momentum. Leaders and staff are taking a longer-term view and investing more convincingly to provide a better education for the pupils. Staff are starting to benefit from leaders' determination to improve the school, as well as the experience that the new leadership team brings. Leaders are rightly prioritising staff training and are beginning to lift morale. As a result, and perhaps more convincingly than in the past, the leadership team's plans to improve are gaining traction. New ways of working are beginning to stick. This is a significant step forward from previous years. Nevertheless, leaders know that there are many aspects that still require significant and rapid improvement.

Several aspects of the school's provision are improving convincingly. This is because staff training is supporting adults well. The most notable improvements have occurred in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the early years and in the teaching of reading. Staff say that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

The new leader in the resource base is bringing rigour to this department, including with curriculum planning. The careful identification of pupils' complex needs has improved. Staff now have a better understanding of pupils' needs. The Ark offers pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans a calm and purposeful learning environment, and pupils respond well to adults' guidance. Here, the teaching of reading is a priority and pupils with EHC plans are developing early reading skills well. The manager has carefully improved the support that pupils receive. Leaders are beginning to ensure that the curriculum provided in The Ark is appropriate and increasingly ambitious.

The experienced SENCo is setting about making improvements in the main school. Training for staff and clearer targets for pupils with SEND are developing the teachers' knowledge of their responsibilities. However, leaders' intentions are not always implemented well enough, leading at times to some pupils not receiving a sufficiently ambitious curriculum.

The new director of curriculum has worked diligently. They have made sure that, in some subjects, teachers' intentions are aligned to the aims and ambition set out in the national curriculum. There is still more to do, however, particularly in making sure that staff identify the key knowledge that they want pupils to remember. For instance, pupils' historical knowledge is developing securely but they are unclear of the meaning of key vocabulary. This limits their ability to understand more demanding work and remember more, over time.

The executive headteacher is beginning to distribute leadership responsibilities more widely. Recently, some staff have been encouraged to take on additional subject leadership roles. For example, there are now subject leaders in place for modern foreign languages and science. Leaders acknowledge that pupils have not received a broad curriculum in the past. This is, in part, due to a legacy of insufficient investment in resourcing. For instance, until recently there were no computers in the school. This has been put right and pupils are now beginning to have computing lessons for the first time. Nevertheless, this means that there are significant gaps for pupils to gain sufficient knowledge and skills that they need for secondary school.

Teaching is beginning to strengthen because of the clear guidance that staff receive. Leaders have judiciously prioritised the development of some subjects over others. Staff have a much better understanding of how to teach reading and mathematics, including in the early years. Pupils, many of whom have gaps in their understanding, are now beginning to catch up. More are mastering the skills of early reading. Leaders know that this work is in the earliest of stages. For instance, staff do not yet promote reading for pleasure strongly enough, particularly in key stage 2.

Leaders' understanding of safeguarding procedures is underdeveloped. Leaders have invested in a new system for recording safeguarding concerns. Leaders check and follow these up. However, staff are not always clear about the expected processes. Most staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children. However, there are gaps in the recording of relevant information on the school's single central record, including for those who work part time, in this school. Staff who were in post in September 2020 have received the required level of safeguarding training. However, some staff who joined midway through the year are still reliant on guidance that they received in previous employment.

Pupils say that staff have increased their expectations of them. Older pupils enjoy lunchtimes. They say that the range of activities at breaktimes has improved. Younger pupils conduct themselves well in the lunch hall and relationships with staff are positive. However, some pupils, particularly those in key stage 1, are not confident that adults sort out difficulties with peers as well as they might. Most pupils say that behaviour has improved in recent weeks, although some still think that unsettled behaviour in lessons causes distraction. Leaders acknowledge that consistently positive behaviour is yet to be achieved.

### **Next Steps**

- Leaders' understanding of their statutory responsibilities to safeguard pupils is underdeveloped. The school's safeguarding procedures are not yet implemented with the precision that is required. Leaders must make sure that the requirements in the latest government guidance are implemented fully to provide the level of protection and assurances that pupils need.

### **Additional support**

At the start of this academic year, support from partners intensified and the leadership team welcomed this. The local authority conducted a review of special educational needs provision which has provided an intelligent steer to the school's work. Officers are now helping leaders to get the school back on track with much-needed change. Support from local networks, including the English hub, is bolstering curriculum development.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior leaders, members of staff, three local authority officers, a representative from the diocese and the respective chairs of the local governing body and strategic board to discuss leaders' actions.

Inspectors also examined the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons in all year groups and viewed some samples of pupils' work in books. They heard pupils read and talked to pupils informally.

Inspectors reviewed the school's improvement plans and other documentation. They considered the views of 15 staff and five parents who responded to the Ofsted surveys.