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Dear Mrs Flynn

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The Trinity Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Jackie Stillings and John Tomlinson, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), to your school on 5 and 6 May 2021, 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 March 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

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

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

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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 Liverpool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 5 May 2021 and 6 May 2021

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staffing changes. Four senior staff members and six teachers have left the school. The local authority appointed a seconded deputy head teacher to strengthen the school's senior leadership team. A new special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) has also been appointed.

Most governors have been newly appointed since the previous inspection. The chair of governors has been in post since September 2020. She is the third chair of governors since the previous inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

School leaders have identified the correct actions that they needed to take to improve the school. School improvement planning is fit for purpose. It demonstrates leaders' ambition to promote a good quality of education, and it provides a clear route towards the removal of serious weaknesses.

Leaders have made headway in tackling the issues that were unearthed at the previous inspection. For example, senior leaders supported new subject leaders to develop their curriculum knowledge and expertise. This support has helped subject leaders to make suitable changes to curriculum plans. Initially, leaders focused on improving the English and mathematics curriculums. Curriculum plans are well ordered in these subjects, including in the early years. During the pandemic, leaders have extended this further by continuing to develop curriculum plans in history, science, and languages.

Leaders have acted to ensure that the school's curriculum is much broader than it was previously. Pupils benefit from a richer set of learning experiences, and they have more opportunities to develop their talents than was the case in the past. For example, subject leaders have designed curriculums in music, art, dance and design and technology that order learning carefully, so that pupils can build on what they already know. This means that pupils are much better placed to know and remember more across a range of different subjects. In turn, they are starting to be much better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers make better use of assessment information than they did previously. This is helping them to adapt the curriculum in order to meet the different needs of pupils. This is especially noticeable in English and mathematics. Teachers also use assessment information carefully to plan extra support for pupils. For example, teachers plan catch-up sessions for those pupils who have forgotten important knowledge following the disruption caused by COVID-19. However, teachers' ability

to check on what pupils know and remember in subjects beyond English and mathematics is not as well developed. As a result, in some subjects, teachers do not design learning that builds on what pupils already know and can do. This means that some pupils struggle to connect new learning to what they have learned before.

Throughout the pandemic, school leaders have worked successfully to raise the profile of reading. This is creating an appetite for reading among pupils. In each subject, teachers place a strong emphasis on important subject vocabulary. As a result, pupils' knowledge of vocabulary across the curriculum continues to grow. The approach to teaching reading in key stage 2 is helping older pupils to read with greater fluency and understanding.

Despite these improvements, there remain some weaknesses in the delivery of the reading and phonics curriculums in the early years and key stage 1. For example, there are times when staff do not ensure that pupils' books are matched to the sounds that they know. In addition, some staff have been unable to access appropriate training to deliver the early reading and phonics curriculum. Understandably, because of the disruption caused by COVID-19, leaders have been unable to check on how well teachers deliver the early reading and phonics curriculums. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to improve the teaching of early reading and phonics.

Leaders have ensured that all staff know and understand their roles in improving the school. Staff feel valued and well supported by senior leaders. Since the previous inspection, staff have benefited from a wide range of appropriate training. The staff team works well together. For instance, more experienced staff mentor those staff who are newer to the profession. This is helping to share good practice and equip all staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver the planned curriculum.

Governors have close oversight of the work of school leaders. This allows them to provide an increasingly suitable level of challenge and support. Leaders ensure that governors are well informed. This helps governors to have a stronger view of the strengths of the school as well as those aspects that require further development.

Disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are receiving a better quality of education than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, the SENDCo is working together with subject leaders and teachers to help them to plan and deliver curriculums that are appropriately challenging for pupils with SEND. The SENDCo works with a range of outside agencies to provide measured and targeted support for pupils with SEND.

Leaders' work to improve pupils' behaviour is showing signs of success. Staff have higher expectations of pupils. This means that most classrooms are calm and provide a suitable environment for pupils to learn. The pupils that inspectors spoke

with reported that the school is changing for the better. Leaders have improved the systems that they use to monitor and raise pupils' rates of attendance. For example, leaders have strengthened the systems for communicating with and supporting families. Staff work closely with parents and carers. Leaders' efforts have successfully yielded a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Additional support

School leaders describe the actions of the local authority and the Archdiocese of Liverpool as highly supportive. Leaders have used the support provided by the local authority to identify clear steps for improvement and to prioritise their actions. Leaders have also used the intensive support and challenge provided by the local authority through school improvement Liverpool to improve the school's English and mathematics curriculums. The archdiocese have supported the school to appoint new foundation governors. New subject leaders have worked in tandem with experienced local authority advisers to design carefully sequenced curriculums that are appropriately ambitious.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised a range of school documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and three members of the governing body including the chair of governors. Inspectors met with a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also observed children and pupils read to trusted adults.

Inspectors spoke with parents before school. They considered the 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, the 17 free-text comments and the 23 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.