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24 June 2021

Claire Gurden  
Headteacher  
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Macclesfield  
Cheshire  
SK11 7SF

Dear Mrs Gurden

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

Following my visit with John Tomlinson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 and 20 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 to improve the school since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection that took place in May 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 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 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.**

I am copying this letter to the interim executive board (IEB), the directors of education for the Diocese of Shrewsbury and 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 reports website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 19 and 20 May 2021**

### **Context**

Since the most recent monitoring visit in May 2019, a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and early years leader have been appointed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on leaders' actions to further improve the school. Leaders' plans to develop some subjects in the wider curriculum and the roles of some middle leaders have been delayed.

### **The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

The school improvement plan sets out clear actions to improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and subjects in the wider curriculum. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that pupils get the best possible education. Middle leaders have used the support from external partners well to improve their approach to subject leadership. This, in turn, is leading to growing leadership capacity to bring about further development. Staff feel well supported by leaders with regard to their workload and well-being.

Subjects such as English and mathematics are well planned and sequenced. Plans cover the steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders of these subjects have accessed training to help them monitor the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility. They have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing in each of these subjects. The curriculum planning for other subjects, including geography, art and design, modern foreign languages and design and technology is not as far ahead. Plans in these subjects do not clearly identify the knowledge and skills that pupils will acquire as they move through the school. Nor do they set out the order in which this knowledge should be taught to enable pupils to know more and remember more. The arrangements for checking how well the curriculum is delivered in these subjects are not as strong as in English and mathematics.

Leaders are making better use of assessment, particularly in English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers use assessment information to adapt the curriculum effectively. Leaders also make appropriate use of assessment information to plan extra support for pupils. Teachers use catch-up sessions for those pupils who have forgotten important knowledge, following the disruption caused by the pandemic. For example, in mathematics, extra support is being given to pupils who have lost fluency in the recall of times tables. Leaders are currently developing systems to check on how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum in other subjects.

The teaching of reading continues to be a priority for school leaders. Some older pupils were able to talk to inspectors about the types of books that they like to read. Younger pupils enjoy reading. Children begin to develop their knowledge of phonics as soon as they start in the early years. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school. Pupils who are struggling to read are given support in a timely manner to help them catch up. However, weaknesses in the teaching of reading remain. Books that younger pupils read are, at times, not well matched to the sounds that they know. This inhibits pupils from becoming confident and fluent readers. Support staff in the early years have not had access to the same high-quality training as their colleagues. This means that these staff may lack confidence and competence in supporting and developing younger children's reading skills.

Leaders have made many improvements to the early years provision since the last monitoring visit in May 2019. There is now more emphasis on promoting children's communication, language and mathematical skills. Children who are falling behind are now more quickly identified. For example, leaders found that that boys' writing skills were not as well developed as they should be. Swift action was taken by the early years leader to design opportunities to encourage boys to write. As a result, boys are becoming keen writers. During the inspection, inspectors observed boys building models, painting pictures and writing about both experiences.

Leaders continue to ensure that behaviour is well managed. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. Pupils are polite and well-mannered and have returned to school ready to learn. Pupils told inspectors that bullying and name-calling are rare and, if they do occur, they are dealt with effectively by staff. Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors endorse these views. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum has been adapted well to support pupils facing challenging circumstances, including behavioural issues. The one-to-one support is carefully informed and well thought out.

Pupils' attendance has been a thorny issue for school leaders in recent years. Before the disruption caused by the pandemic, attendance had improved. This was as a result of systems that leaders had put in place to support pupils who were struggling to attend school on a regular basis. Since the school reopened to all pupils in March 2021, most pupils have returned to school. Leaders and staff have provided extra support to those pupils who were anxious about coming back to school.

The SENCo has improved the systems to identify, assess and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She provides guidance to staff to ensure that careful adaptations are made to the curriculum to allow pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers. The SENCo also works closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils who need specialist support can access it in a timely manner.

School leaders are currently being supported well by an interim executive board (IEB). Members of the IEB have a secure understanding of the issues that leaders face and the actions that they are taking to improve. They are also clear about what leaders need to do to develop further the quality of education. Members of the IEB are mindful of staff's well-being, including that of the headteacher.

### **Additional support**

In addition to the external support offered by the IEB, school leaders are receptive to, and appreciative of, the support from the local authority, from officers from the two dioceses and from educational consultants. Leaders have used this support effectively to develop the early years provision, the school's remote education offer and the provision for pupils with SEND.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and observed pupils read to a familiar adult. They visited lessons and observed behaviours around the school. Inspectors met with representatives from the IEB, from the local authority and from the Diocese of Chester and the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Inspectors spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. They considered the six responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the eight responses to the staff survey.