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4 October 2022

Sarah Daffurn  
Acting Headteacher  
Christ Church CofE First School  
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Dear Mrs Daffurn

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Christ Church CofE First School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 21 and 22 September 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in February 2022.

During the inspection, Marie Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), discussed with you and other senior leaders, including governors, the diocese and the local authority, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also carried out document scrutiny, including safeguarding records, visited lessons and met with parents, pupils and staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Christ Church CofE First School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.**

**The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.**

During this visit, I looked closely at safeguarding, behaviour and the school's arrangements for early reading.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some key changes to staffing at the school. These have mainly affected the senior leadership. The acting headteacher was

appointed in September 2022. The local authority commissioned an interim executive headteacher to work part time with the school from September 2022. Leaders plan further changes to bring about stability in staffing. An interim executive board is responsible for governance and has followed the directive academy order. There are plans to join a multi-academy trust (MAT) from January 2023.

Leaders, including governors, have a clear and insightful knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have rightly prioritised safeguarding. Leaders have responded quickly to issues identified at the previous inspection. Safer recruitment checks are completed before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. All new staff complete a thorough induction process. Staff and governors benefit from regular safeguarding training. They know and understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities well.

Leaders have introduced a new system to record and refer safeguarding concerns. This has led to improvements in the early identification of safeguarding needs. This means leaders are able to put in place appropriate support more swiftly. Leaders work with a range of professional partners to promote pupils' safety and welfare. As a result, robust safeguarding systems and processes are in place to keep pupils safe. Pupils say that they feel safe. They now know the difference between bullying and falling out with their friends. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have confidence that staff will act quickly to resolve any incidents. All pupils can name a trusted adult they would speak with if they have worries. This includes appropriately trained staff who pupils easily identify by their rainbow-coloured lanyards.

Leaders' improvement work is timely and well planned. Along with an unrelenting focus on safeguarding, they have not wasted time in starting to rectify other issues, including concerns around behaviour. Leaders have implemented a new behaviour policy. They are helping staff to develop their skills and knowledge to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Staff help pupils enjoy playtime with their friends in a structured and supportive way. Staff and pupils describe the school environment as being calmer. Pupils describe the behaviour of their peers as being 'a lot' better. However, pupils' behaviour is not consistently strong across the school day. Leaders have identified that some pupils need additional support. They are working with appropriate external agencies to provide social and emotional support, to help pupils strengthen their behaviour.

The special educational needs coordinator leads the development of individual plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures consistency in how provision is planned. However, the implementation of pupils' plans is in its infancy. This means that support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Leaders have plans to address this area of improvement.

Leaders have started to make improvements to the school's curriculum. For example, they introduced a validated phonics scheme that is taught across the school. Reading books now match pupils' phonic knowledge accurately. Many pupils use the strategies taught, such as sounding out, with increasing confidence. Pupils enjoy reading. Nevertheless,

there remain inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. Leaders are working with staff to improve subject knowledge and ensure the phonics scheme is taught consistently well.

Staff report that leaders are approachable. Staff feel listened to and valued. Leaders are willing to do what they can to help staff in their day-to-day work. Staff appreciate this. Staff, leaders and governors work together for the benefit of the pupils.

Following the school's inspection in February 2022, governors and staff have worked closely with the local authority, diocese and a local MAT. The local authority commissioned a support package during the late spring and summer term 2022. This has led to safeguarding systems being introduced and other support, including relevant training and professional development, that have contributed to the school's improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner, and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Marie Thomas  
**His Majesty's Inspector**