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Mr Christopher Raymond
Christ The King Catholic School, Amesbury
Earls Court Road
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Dear Mr Raymond

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

Following my visit to your school on 3 and 4 October 2018, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2018.

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

leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures

the local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose

the school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not 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 website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2018.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing leadership capacity in the school so that leadership is not reliant on external support
 - securing an effective safeguarding culture
 - ensuring that middle leaders receive the training and support they need to meet the requirements of their roles
 - establishing clear systems to check the progress of all groups of pupils so that the measurement of pupils' achievement is accurate
 - ensuring that leaders' checks on teaching are robust and that teachers act on leaders' advice so that pupils who have previously underachieved catch up quickly
 - improving the provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that these pupils make consistently good progress
 - insisting that teacher assessment is accurate
 - ensuring that curriculum requirements are met, in English, mathematics and across a wide range of subjects
 - ensuring that leaders and governors track pupils' behaviour so that it improves and becomes good.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and challenge middle-attaining and the most able pupils sufficiently
 - teachers plan work that meets pupils' needs in English so that pupils use and apply their reading and writing skills well and make good progress
 - teachers plan work that enables pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills to reason and solve problems proficiently for their age
 - teaching in the early years is consistently good, assessment is accurate and provision inside and outside is consistently good.
- Improve the quality of personal development and welfare urgently by ensuring that:
 - teaching motivates and interests pupils, so that pupils' passivity is minimised and pupils consistently apply their best effort to their learning
 - learning time is used to its full extent across the day
 - safeguarding systems minimise pupils' risk of harm and support the most vulnerable pupils to achieve consistently well.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 October 2018

Evidence

The inspector met with the interim headteacher and members of the school's leadership team. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from Clifton Diocese.

The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times. The inspector also made visits to classrooms, accompanied by the interim headteacher. Pupils' mathematics and English work from all year groups, including the resource base, was scrutinised. A range of other documentation, including the local authority's statement of action, the school's improvement plans, and the minutes of the governing body meetings was reviewed. The inspector checked a wide range of information about safety and safeguarding, including the checks made on adults' suitability to work with children.

Context

Significant changes in staffing and governance have taken place since the school was deemed to require special measures in February 2018. A consultant headteacher was appointed to cover the headteacher's long-term absence over the last academic year. The headteacher resigned in July 2018 and the consultant headteacher left in July. Two teachers also left the school at the end of the summer term.

The interim headteacher took up post in September 2018. In the period since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to leaders' roles and responsibilities. Currently, leadership roles have not been defined.

There are no immediate plans for the school to become an academy. The governing body, in partnership with the local authority and the diocese, have plans to strengthen the school's relationship with other local schools to support, for example, the leadership of special educational needs. However, no formal arrangements have been considered at this point.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The local authority has removed the governing body's financial delegated powers. New appointments to the governing body have further strengthened governors' expertise and challenge. However, the pace of improvement has not been swift enough.

Leaders and governors have not responded with sufficient urgency to tackle the issues identified at the previous inspection. As a result, they are not taking effective action towards the removal of the special measures designation. Changes in leadership and the poor handover between school leaders has resulted in delayed school

improvement. Furthermore, considerable changes to the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders alongside significant changes in staffing and year group organisation has also hindered the pace of the school's recovery.

The previous inspection report stated that there should be an external review of the school's use of pupil premium. This has not happened. Governors have persistently challenged leaders for information but, to date, no information has been forthcoming. Governors have set a date for a pupil premium review.

Previous leadership has taken action to bring about changes to leaders' roles and responsibilities. However, leaders have failed to communicate these changes to teachers with clarity. Consequently, senior and middle leaders have been ill-prepared for the changes made. Leaders have not provided teachers with sufficient guidance about how to build on their strengths or how to tackle weaknesses. Misunderstandings in school procedures and staff responsibilities are rife. In contrast, this term, leaders have implemented systems to provide clarity in what teachers are expected to teach in English and mathematics. This is helpful for the significant number of teachers who have changed year groups over the past year. Although in its infancy, this work is supporting teachers in planning age-appropriate learning.

The systems which leaders have implemented to measure pupils' progress are not yet fit for purpose. Confusion exists among staff about leaders' expectations on how and what to record about pupils' achievement. Systems implemented do not support leaders' or teachers' understanding of pupils' starting points. Consequently, the information governors receive is not an accurate representation of how well pupils are achieving.

Currently, there is no school improvement plan. Although previous plans note areas requiring improvement and have had clear timescales, they have not worked as an effective tool for governors to hold senior leaders to account. Leaders have not ascertained pupils' starting points in determining the course of action for improvement. Consequently, this has provided leaders and governors with a somewhat misleading picture of the school's effectiveness.

Leaders' actions to improve the early years are beginning to have a positive impact. Investment in the environment in early years and a purposefully-shaped curriculum is providing an effective springboard for improvement. Similarly, a whole-school improvement drive in reading, including the development of two school libraries, has raised the profile of reading in the school.

Inspectors were concerned with the depth of understanding staff had about safeguarding at the previous inspection. Subsequently, the local authority carried out a review and identified several necessary actions. Governors and senior leaders have taken their responsibilities seriously and much good work has been done. For example, staff vetting checks ensure staff's suitability to work with children and safeguarding documents are complete and well-organised. Staff have received training

and know how to report and escalate concerns when they are concerned that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Recent improvements to registering pupils' attendance at breakfast club are effective. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that new systems are fully embedded.

The current headteacher is already making notable improvements to the day-to-day running of the school. Parents and staff appreciate his drive for openness and good communication. Staff describe him as 'a breath of fresh air' and parents say, 'He has restored our faith in the school.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers have received too little guidance and support in developing their subject knowledge. Few teachers are identifying weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding to plan suitable learning. Leaders have introduced a procedure that is effective in helping teachers to understand what each year group should be taught. However, teachers' lack of subject knowledge in some subjects, including in writing and mathematics, and in some year groups, continues to result in a mismatch of learning for the lower-ability and most-able pupils.

Teachers' use of assessment in the early years is increasingly accurate. A recently revised curriculum is helping all adults who work in the early years to match children's developmental needs with activities accurately.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils behave well in and around the school. There is a clear sense of order and transitions throughout the day are well organised so that little time is wasted. Leaders have implemented effective systems to encourage pupils' good learning habits. Pupils understand the high expectations and most adhere to them well. Pupils say that the house-point system is inspiring them to put in extra effort. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour and low-level disruption are now rare. Pupils say that behaviour has improved in the school and parents agree.

Pupils' attendance remains broadly in line with the national average. However, despite leaders' careful checks, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school remains high. Leaders are working closely with the educational welfare officer and families to tackle this weakness, but it is too soon to see any improvements.

Outcomes for pupils

The recent unvalidated information from the 2018 key stage 2 tests show that pupils continue to make weak progress. Pupils' gaps in learning because of previously weak teaching were too great to overcome. Disadvantaged pupils continue to make slow progress. However, work in pupils' books this year shows some encouraging signs of improvement in some year groups across the school. This is because teachers are

teaching to the appropriate expectations of the year group. Generally, pupils' work in English books shows that tasks are better tuned to pupils' abilities than in mathematics. However, inequalities continue with lower-ability pupils and those who are most-able not receiving the support or challenge they require.

More children, proportionally, reached the expected standard or a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage than those nationally in 2018. This represents a notable improvement. The early years leader is not complacent and recognises that there is still more to do to ensure that the most able children excel in their writing.

External support

The local authority and diocesan board have worked in partnership to strengthen the governing body. The local authority has supported improvements in safeguarding at the school. The local authority has secured the appointment of the current interim headteacher. There is still a heavy reliance on external support. However, the appointment of the interim headteacher has brought about a wave of confidence for staff and parents. He has quickly implemented improvements in communication systems. Parents feel well-informed and are encouraged by improvements in the school.