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Mrs J Wardle  
Acting Principal  
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary Academy  
Ashmore Avenue  
Ashmore Park  
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Wolverhampton  
West Midlands  
WV11 2LT

Dear Mrs Wardle

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 25 and 26 June 2019, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2018. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

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

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the multi-academy company board, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Increase capacity of leadership and governance in order to:
  - monitor and evaluate teaching more rigorously to ensure that it is rapidly improving
  - hold teachers to account for the progress of different groups of learners, including boys, disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and most-able pupils
  - ensure that action plans have clear and measurable intended outcomes which indicate who is responsible for taking action and then monitoring and evaluating the plans
  - ensure that teachers' assessment is consistently accurate
  - secure strong leadership for SEN and the pupil premium
  - develop a curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain
  - make sure that governors challenge and support leaders
  - engage more with external partners to provide robust and objective challenge
  - reduce absence and persistent absence further so that these are in line with the national average
  - overhaul the school's website so that it meets the Department for Education's (DfE) requirements for academies.
- Improve outcomes in key stages 1 and 2, especially in reading, and for boys, disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and most-able pupils by:
  - ensuring teaching is consistently at least good
  - ensuring that teachers' planning focuses on meeting the needs of these pupils, so they can make rapid progress
  - ensuring that additional funding is appropriately targeted and evaluated to ensure that it is leading to rapid improvements in outcomes for pupils
  - providing pupils with the opportunity to develop their phonics skills in key stage 2 in order to acquire a higher standard of reading
  - extending activities for reasoning and problem solving to enable more able pupils to work in greater depth in mathematics
  - setting expectations for writing that are high across all subjects.
- Promote pupils' cultural development so that they have a better understanding of

their locality, the UK and the wider world by:

- extending their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures
- ensuring that their understanding of the wider world is more balanced towards the modern age
- ensuring that cultural stereotypes are removed and consistently challenged.

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

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 25 to 26 June 2019**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed pupils' learning in English and mathematics lessons in key stages 1 and 2. She also observed teaching and learning in the early years foundation stage. The acting principal and deputy headteacher accompanied the inspector for some of the observations. The inspector looked at pupils' work across a range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics, spoke to pupils about their learning and observed their behaviour in lessons. The inspector met formally with a group of pupils and observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime. The inspector heard a selection of pupils read from Years 3, 4 and 5.

Meetings were held with the acting principal, deputy headteacher, the assistant leader of special educational needs and the leader responsible for mathematics. Further meetings were held with members of the interim academy committee (IAC), a member of the school improvement board (SIB) and two representatives from the local authority. A meeting was held with a national leader for education (NLE) who is supporting the school.

The inspector evaluated a range of documents, including information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils, the pupil premium and attendance. Additional documents, such as information about the monitoring of the quality of teaching, a local authority review, the school's action plan and safeguarding information and policies were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, there have been further changes to the leadership structure. There is now an assistant leader of special educational needs and a new leader of mathematics. There have been no changes in teachers since the last visit.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Since the last monitoring visit leadership and management have improved considerably. The developments in the leadership of special educational needs have been rapid and highly successful. An assistant leader for special educational needs is now in place. Leaders have completely revised the provision for pupils with SEND. A detailed provision map clearly identifies what pupils' needs are. Leaders have worked closely with specialist agencies from the local authority to ensure that pupils' needs are correctly identified and that the right support is in place to help them make better progress. As a result, the special educational needs register now accurately identifies pupils with SEND. Leaders have also ensured that support for pupils with the most significant needs has been secured from external agencies. Teachers have a better understanding of what pupils' needs are and how to plan for them. However, where teaching is weak some pupils are not supported well enough

to help them make progress. Leaders are aware of this and are providing further support to improve staff's understanding of how to plan to meet pupils' specific needs. Leaders have begun to improve teaching assistants' knowledge and skills in supporting pupils with SEND. They have also reviewed the effectiveness of additional support provided in support sessions outside lessons. Leaders have a clear understanding of where further improvements are needed and plans are in place to ensure that appropriate training and support are provided to further improve the provision for pupils with SEND. While there have been significant improvements in the provision for pupils with SEND, there is still some way to go to ensure that the provision is consistently strong across the school to ensure that pupils with SEND make strong progress in all year groups.

The pupil premium leader has successfully developed effective provision for disadvantaged pupils. The leader ensures that the funding is used very well to support disadvantaged pupils. All staff understand pupils' barriers to learning. Where teaching is strong, these pupils make substantial progress because teachers plan learning which is precisely matched to their needs. The leader is providing further support to some teachers to help them better meet disadvantaged pupils' needs. Overall, the cohesive and carefully targeted programme of support now means that the majority of disadvantaged pupils are making progress which is in line with, or better than, that of non-disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, due to some previous weak teaching, some pupils still have gaps in their learning. The leader knows where these gaps are, and further support is planned to help these pupils to catch up to attain the standards expected for their ages.

Leaders have detailed monitoring systems which are sharply focused on key areas of teaching and learning. The systems clearly set out the school's expectations for areas such as planning and matching work closely to pupils' learning needs. This means that there is a more consistent approach to teaching across the school. The acting principal and deputy headteacher accurately identify strengths in the quality of teaching, but also where there are key weaknesses. Leaders are using the monitoring systems very effectively to address the remaining weak teaching.

There have been significant improvements in the development of the middle leadership team. The new leader of mathematics is very new to her role. She has rapidly grasped a detailed understanding of the where the mathematics curriculum needs to be developed, especially in challenging the most able pupils. The leader of mathematics has clear plans to further support and develop the teaching of mathematics across the school. However, as she is so new to her role, the impact of her actions is yet to be seen.

Leaders have developed planning overviews for all subjects in the national curriculum. The plans set out the knowledge and skills which should be taught in each year group. However, too many teachers pay little or no regard to these plans. During the monitoring visit pupils' work in science, geography and art was reviewed. Books show that pupils' progress in these subjects is very weak. For example, the

work that Year 6 pupils complete in science is of a lower standard than the work in Year 4. Pupils' mapping skills in Year 2 are of a more advanced level than those in Year 5. Pupils' artistic skills are very poor across the school. Pupils show little understanding of the subjects they are learning about. For example, some pupils were confused about whether the subject they were discussing was history or geography. Leaders understand that the poor teaching in the foundation subjects needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency to ensure that pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education. Plans are in place to review and develop the curriculum, but the impact of the plans is yet to be seen. The religious education curriculum is very well taught. This is a strength of the school.

Governance continues to be highly effective. The IAC and SIB have a detailed understanding of where improvements have been made, but also where key weaknesses remain. They work closely with leaders and provide strong support and challenge in equal measure to ensure that leaders are continuing to move the school forward. The IAC is very proactive and is reviewing the governance structure to ensure that governance continues to develop and remains strong.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Phonics teaching is consistently strong across key stage 1. Leaders have built upon the strengths in this area since the last visit. Highly effective phonics teaching has led to the vastly improved outcomes in phonics at the end of Year 1 this year. Leaders are continuing to develop the teaching of reading across key stage 2. Pupils show a love of reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they read. However, some teachers do not assess pupils' reading well enough and therefore provide pupils with books that lack challenge. This is especially so for the most able pupils. This does not help these pupils to make strong progress in reading.

More teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning activities. In key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, these activities provide pupils with a high level of challenge. Pupils are eager to have a go at these challenges and do not give up when they find the work difficult. They are developing a range of skills to try different ways of solving problems. Pupils in these year groups are now making strong progress in mathematics. However, in upper key stage 2 teachers do not challenge pupils well enough. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are still too low, especially for the most able. As a result, pupils' progress, especially that of the most able, is limited.

Some teachers are now using assessment systems well to help them judge where pupils are in their learning. However, this is not consistent across the school. Leaders have identified where teaching is weak and are providing support to improve this.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils are polite and very friendly. There is a very caring ethos across the school. Pupils are keen to share their learning and confidently talk about what they enjoy in school. Pupils show a high level of respect to one another and listen carefully to others' points of views. In the majority of classes pupils show an eagerness to learn and try their very best. Very few lessons are disrupted by inappropriate behaviour.

Pupils now show an appreciation of, and respect for, other religions and beliefs. Their understanding of different cultures is now better supported through the curriculum, especially the religious education curriculum.

Leaders continue to monitor attendance closely. They have a detailed understanding of the individual needs of pupils and their families where attendance is an issue. They provide effective individual support to families to help improve their children's attendance where needed.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

The proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the required standard in the phonics screening check has risen considerably this year to 93%. This marked improvement reflects the highly effective teaching of phonics in key stage 1.

Attainment at the end of key stage 1 this year has also shown improvements in reading and writing. The largest rise in attainment was in mathematics, with 78% of pupils achieving the expected standard. These outcomes are the result of the particularly strong teaching in Year 2. Many gaps in pupils' learning from previous weak teaching have been closed. However, only a small proportion of pupils achieved a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. At the time of the monitoring visit, leaders had not received the results of the key stage 2 reading and mathematics tests.

In lower key stage 2, highly effective teaching is enabling all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

In upper key stage 2, pupils are not making the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in their books shows that teachers do not match work well enough to their needs. This is particularly so for the most able pupils, where expectations of what they can do are too low.

## **Early years**

Staff in the early years do not have a clear enough understanding of how to assess children's learning. As a result, they do not plan activities that are matched well enough to children's learning needs. Weak assessment practices also result in staff

having low expectations of what children can achieve. This limits the progress that children make, especially the most able, across all areas of the early years curriculum.

Additionally, children do not have sufficient opportunities to practise forming letters and numbers. Work in their books shows that many children still do not write their numbers and letters correctly. Children's weak handwriting and number formation is hindering the progress they are making in writing and mathematics.

### **External support**

The external support provided by the NLE is highly effective. He has worked alongside the acting principal to develop the school's monitoring systems to drive improvements in the overall quality of teaching. In addition to this, the NLE provides middle leaders with opportunities to work alongside experienced leaders from another school. This is helping them to develop their leadership skills rapidly.

The support from the local authority is also contributing significantly to the improvements across the school. Notably, the support to improve the use of the pupil premium has led to a substantial improvement in the provision for disadvantaged pupils. The local authority's support for the early years also ensures that assessments are moderated carefully to ensure that they accurately reflect children's attainment.

The NLE and local authority representatives' support and guidance are key factors in driving rapid improvements across the school, especially in improving the quality of teaching and developing middle leaders. They have a strong understanding of the school's strengths, but also the weaknesses which need to be tackled next.