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Mrs Kate Griffin  
Headteacher  
Christ The King Catholic Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Griffin

### **Short inspection of Christ The King Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is despite an increase in the size of the school, a major building programme and considerable changes in staffing and leadership. Supported by an able deputy headteacher and a well-informed middle leadership team, you provide a strong sense of direction for the school, based on a very clear determination to provide the best opportunities for every pupil. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and have identified the right priorities for further improvement. The staff who completed the online questionnaire all said that they are proud to work at the school and receive the necessary training and support to help them develop professionally.

The governors know the school well and provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. They have a clear vision for the future development of the school. Through careful financial management and market research, they have ensured that the recent expansion of the school is sustainable, and that the extension of resources can be maintained.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to: raise achievement in the early years; improve the teaching of phonics; and ensure that reading and writing are strong throughout the school. You have brought about clear improvements in each of these areas. Because of changes to policies and practices, results in the early years, in phonics and in writing have risen to above national averages. Standards in reading have also improved, especially in key stage 1. The work seen in classrooms

and in pupils' books shows that these high standards are being maintained by the pupils who are currently at the school. However, we agreed that the most able pupils are not consistently provided with enough challenge and there is more to be done to enable pupils to reach the higher standards in national tests.

Pupils behave very well in and around the school. They are polite and considerate and relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors to the school. They show respect for their environment, which is kept spotlessly clean and very well maintained by the site management team. In lessons, pupils work with concentration and enthusiasm. They told me that their learning is rarely interrupted by others' poor behaviour and teachers are very quick to deal with any interruptions. Pupils really enjoy the wide range of clubs, arts and sporting events, visits and residential available to them and most of them take a regular part in such activities. They are proud of their school and almost all would recommend it to their friends. The great majority of parents and carers would also recommend the school to others. They appreciate its caring, family atmosphere and the support that you and your colleagues provide for their children.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All the parents I spoke to, and almost all who completed Parent View, said that children are safe at the school. The pupils I met all said that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe there, as well as on the way to and from school. They know which staff to go to if they have any problems or worries and are confident that they will receive appropriate help and support. They said that there is some bullying at the school but this is dealt with quickly and effectively. This echoed the views of those who completed the pupil survey. Pupils say that there is no racist bullying at the school and that they are encouraged to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances, especially when using the internet or social media. They know precisely what to do if they come across any unsuitable material. You are diligent in following the correct procedures for taking pupils off roll and you could account for the whereabouts of every pupil absent on the day of the inspection.

Staff and governors have received up-to-date training on safeguarding. The staff I met all knew how to identify possible signs of abuse and what to do if they have any concerns about the welfare of a child. Through the 'Journey in Love' and personal and social education programmes, you place considerable emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop respect for themselves and each other. You have effective systems for checking on the suitability of adults to work with children. The school grounds are secure and access to the building is carefully controlled. You are working closely with the police and the community to reduce illegal parking and ensure the safety of pupils at the beginning and end of the day.

### **Inspection findings**

- The last inspection report found that standards in the early years were not as good as in the rest of the school. I was interested to know what you have done

in response to this. You were able to show me that, through new leadership, better planning, changes to the curriculum and the development of a more stimulating environment, you have made significant improvements to this aspect of the school's work. The proportions of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception have risen from below average in 2015 to above average for the last three years. Results in mathematics, reading and writing have also improved. For the last three years, the proportions achieving above what is typical for their age have been high. In 2018, the proportions exceeding expectations were in line with or better than the national average.

- Pupils' performance in phonics was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. We discussed whether the situation has improved since then. Here again, you have made major changes to teaching which have led to significant improvements in results. From being below average in 2015, results in the phonics screening check rose to average the following year. For the last two years they have been well above average. These standards are being maintained. The pupils who read to me made very effective use of phonics to decipher unfamiliar words.
- A third area that we discussed was the teaching of English, which was an area for improvement in the last inspection. The changes you have made to your policy and approach to the teaching of writing have had a very positive effect. In summer 2018, pupils achieved well at key stages 1 and 2, including at greater depth. These improvements are being maintained. The writing in current pupils' books shows increasing sophistication in sentence construction and a growing ability to produce vivid accounts and to convey atmosphere and mood, using a widening vocabulary.
- The modifications you have made to your approach to reading have also been successful in raising standards, particularly at key stage 1. Reading results for seven-year-olds have improved and, for the last two years, have been strong. Reading results at key stage 2 were above average from 2015 to 2017 but fell below average last summer. This was a result of specific issues relating to that particular group of pupils. These factors also detracted from results in mathematics.
- To avoid a repetition of this situation, you and your staff have changed your approach to checking on pupils' progress. You are now gathering information earlier in the year. Through the 'learning journey' conversations with parents, you are identifying how you can work together to provide the necessary, ongoing support for children throughout the year. This development was one of the positive aspects of the school that the parents highlighted in their conversations with me. Work seen in books and in classrooms showed that pupils currently at the school are making good progress, especially in English. Results for the pupils who left key stage 1 in 2016 were below average. To compensate for this, you have provided additional help for them. This has led to impressive improvements in their work, as was very evident in our visit to look at work and talk to pupils in key stage 2.
- You agreed with me that the most able pupils are not challenged consistently. In mathematics, for example, the most able pupils in both key stages were given

very similar work to the rest of the class and had to sit listening to explanations of calculation methods that they had already clearly mastered. As a result, they did not make the progress of which they were capable.

- The attendance record for your school has been consistently better than average since the last inspection. I wanted to know whether this continues to be the case. You were able to show me that attendance in 2017/18 was again above average and the figures for this term are as high as they were at the same point last year.
- The final area that I explored was the organisation of the curriculum. Your colleagues provided convincing evidence that pupils have access to a broadly-based curriculum, enriched by a wide range of additional activities. They have clear planning systems to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning within subject areas.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are challenged appropriately and consistently, so that the proportions reaching the higher standards, or gaining a greater depth of understanding, are at least in line with national averages.

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 website.

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I examined a range of documentation and discussed your self-evaluation with you and the deputy headteacher. I met six governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body, and spoke to representatives of the archdiocese and the local authority. I discussed the curriculum with four subject coordinators. Together with you or the deputy headteacher, I visited lessons to observe teaching and look at books. You and the attendance officer gave me information on behaviour and attendance and the deputy headteacher and I discussed safeguarding. I met eight pupils, chosen at random from key stage 2, and spoke to staff and pupils as I walked round the school. I examined the 18 responses to the staff survey and the 51 responses to the pupil survey. As well as examining the 47 responses to Parent View, I spoke to 15 parents and relatives as they brought their children to school.