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Chris Beazeley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Beazeley

Urgent inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Jessie Linsley, His Majesty's Inspector, to the school on 22 October 2025, I write on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss the school.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for urgent inspections. The inspection was carried out because His Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school. Concerns had been raised with Ofsted that the school climate may not provide an open and robust safeguarding culture.

We do not give graded judgements on urgent inspections. However, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but where no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection will normally be a graded inspection, which will be carried out under section 5 of the Act and be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the urgent inspection as a graded inspection immediately.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including trust audits, policies and training records. We reviewed aspects of the school's relationships, sex and health education curriculum. I reviewed risk assessments and support plans in place for pupils. We met with you, other senior leaders and staff, the chief executive officer and inclusion lead of the Assisi Catholic Trust. I also spoke to a representative of Southend-on-Sea local authority. We also spoke to staff from a provider of alternative provision that the school commissions places at. In

addition, we held discussions with groups of pupils from all key stages to gather their views on their experience at school. We observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons and at social times. We also spoke to parents at the school gate.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective

Main findings

The trust has ensured that the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements are sufficiently robust to keep pupils safe. Staff identify risks to pupils and provide them with the support they need. When it is necessary to do so, the school makes timely referrals to children's social care. These actions are carefully recorded. Leaders appropriately share key information with staff in school to enable them to check pupils' safety and well-being. The school uses alternative provision and counsellors to provide pupils with tailored support. In the rare instances that pupils exhibit more challenging behaviour, the school establishes clear risk assessments and behaviour plans. It uses these effectively. These steps ensure that pupils get the help and support they need to keep themselves and others safe. The school carries out robust pre-employment checks on adults who wish to work with children. The trust regularly reviews the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection arrangements, such as safer recruitment procedures. The trust has reviewed its processes to improve practice. For example, it has worked to ensure that the school now always promptly communicates any serious incidents or concerns to leaders at the trust or other local services.

The school has ensured that all staff understand the vital importance of their role in keeping children safe. They receive appropriate and up-to-date training, about both national issues and risks and challenges in the local area. Staff know pupils well so they are alert to, and follow up, any changes in their behaviour which might indicate concerns. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils' well-being. They do so effectively. This enables leaders to quickly take the steps that are necessary to ensure pupils' safety. The school and trust are further strengthening the knowledge and practice of staff, for instance, around harmful sexual behaviours and the use of restraint.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered and relevant personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. This provides pupils with important knowledge about their safety and well-being. Key content is revisited regularly so that it sticks in pupils' memories. Pupils, including children in the early years, learn about risks and how to manage them. Older pupils talk confidently and knowledgeably about how to safely use the internet and social media. Pupils are aware of local issues. These include how to keep safe at the seaside and on the railway. Pupils understand, in age-appropriate ways, the importance of personal space and consent. They know how to challenge someone, who, as pupils call it, 'pops the personal bubble' without permission. Pupils know how to report any issues or worries to trusted adults. They do so, knowing that they will get the help they need.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils know what is expected of them. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are very rare and are dealt with effectively. The school has a strong sense of community. Pupils look out for each other. For example, pupils in Year 6 support children's learning in Reception. Pupils know how to maintain their well-being. They treat each other, and adults, kindly and with respect. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school.

Additional support

The trust has established clear policies and procedures to ensure that the school is a safe and positive environment for pupils. The trust carries out regular reviews of safeguarding and child protection arrangements so that these are well understood and used effectively. It checks on the effectiveness of the school's practice and, when necessary, provides support to improve it. This includes working with other organisations, such as the local authority. This scrutiny supports the school to further develop its practice, for instance, through developing specific aspects of staff knowledge and expertise.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Assisi Catholic Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Brentwood, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Southend-on-Sea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Woodley
His Majesty's Inspector