

1 March 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of St Crispin's School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a virtual meeting to St Crispin's School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children, young people and their families, have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's and young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

### **Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19**

Staff in the school and the local authority have worked well to support children, young people and their families deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic the school was a learning hub for pupils from two other schools as well as children and young people from St Crispin's School. Staff supported children and young people using different approaches such as learning in school, digital lessons, resources for learning at home and regular communication with parents and carers. The school worked well with other partners and services to identify children and young people who needed higher levels of intervention and responded appropriately.

Staff follow strict protocols and routines to support and maintain the return of pupils to school. Staff and children stay within small class groups and limit interaction with others. The senior leadership team continue to deal with the challenges of the pandemic such as staff absence. In addition, the school is preparing to move to a new campus in the near future. Work continues to prepare the school community for this transition.

Staff in the school have supported children and young people well in their return to school. Individualised educational plans focussed on health, wellbeing and resilience and are helping learners adapt to new school routines. Health professionals are positive about how staff work collaboratively to ensure children and young people have effective programmes in areas such as communication and behaviour. Parents speak highly about how staff communicate with them and deal with any issues they raise. Parents are keen to be fully informed about plans for transition to the new school.

### **Progress with recommendations from previous inspection**

The headteacher was appointed just before the COVID-19 pandemic. She has worked very well with the local authority and staff in the school to progress recommendations under very challenging circumstances. Strong communication from the senior leadership team has improved the confidence of staff across the school. There is good teamwork within class

groups and improved opportunities for staff to meet and discuss the needs of children and young people. As a result, staff have a better understanding about the individual needs of learners and can analyse behaviours that may be challenging. The school has a high level of support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This service is used well to assess children's and young people's communication and behaviour. Since the original inspection there has been a significant reduction in incidents. A robust system is now in place to monitor and analyse physical incidents. Actions are then taken to amend practices and review strategies in order to eliminate further incidents. The school should continue with the well-considered plans to review policies related to behaviour.

Despite the pandemic and preparation for moving to the new campus, staff have made a positive start in evaluating the work of the school and identifying what needs to improve. Staff identified their own strengths and needs through Individual professional review meetings during the pandemic. They have identified positive approaches from the pandemic such as the use of outdoor learning and the benefits of using digital technology. They are including these important positive approaches in their curriculum development planning. Plans are in place to review the school's vision, values and aims to ensure they reflect appropriate outcomes for learners. The senior leadership team and staff have agreed that the move to the new campus will provide an opportunity to refresh the school's vision. Staff continue to engage with national guidance to reflect on their own practice. They have identified correctly the need to improve the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all learners. They are beginning to develop learning pathways that reflect the individual needs of children and young people.

The senior leadership team is working effectively to continue to improve learning and teaching across the school. Improved timetables and better information about the individual needs of learners is helping staff plan more effectively. The pandemic has impacted on the ability of senior leaders to measure the quality of the school's work. However, the senior leadership team and the local authority are fully aware of the need to continue with this work.

### What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. The City of Edinburgh Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality its education service.

Monica Reilly  
HM Inspector