

19 October 2018

Mr Michael Holyoake  
Headteacher  
Pitton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mr Michael Holyoake

### **Short inspection of Pitton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 October 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 April 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the last inspection, outcomes for children in the early years have improved and children routinely achieve well. The teaching of phonics is consistently strong and pupils achieve well in reading in both key stages.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve sentence structure and vocabulary in pupils' writing. You have taken effective action to improve the teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Consequently, pupils achieve well in this subject. However, teachers do not routinely help pupils to apply these skills in their writing, which limits how well they achieve. Since the last inspection, the teaching of mathematics at key stage 2 has not improved sufficiently. As a result, the proportion of pupils who make strong progress and achieve well is below average.

Teachers' use of assessment in writing and mathematics is not sufficiently accurate. This restricts their ability to determine pupils' precise starting points. As a result, the work teachers provide for pupils is not routinely matched to pupils' abilities, which hinders their progress.

Parents typically comment that pupils benefit from the extra teaching support that you provide, which enables pupils to focus on their learning. However, some teaching interventions do not precisely focus on the skills that pupils need to improve. As a result, several pupils make insufficient progress towards achieving the standards typical for their age.

You recognise that improvements in teaching, particularly in mathematics, have been too slow to take effect. You have recently begun to delegate more responsibilities to subject leaders, so that they have ownership of monitoring and improving teaching. However, subject leaders' evaluations lack rigour. Consequently, they do not identify soon enough when pupils are making weak progress. This restricts how well they can support teachers to remedy this.

Parents who shared their views are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Several parents comment that they value your enthusiasm, commitment and dedication. They typically comment that they are 'overjoyed' with the school and that choosing Pitton Primary School was the 'best decision' they ever made.

Governors are dedicated to supporting school improvement. They ask relevant questions and undertake visits to assure themselves of the school's effectiveness. However, they do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. This means that they do not consistently identify when and how teaching needs to improve. This limits the degree of challenge and support that they can provide.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because they know what is expected of them. Pupils are friendly and polite and extend a warm welcome to visitors. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Pupils are self-assured and motivated to learn. As a result, they settle to work quickly and listen respectfully to instructions from adults.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pastoral support of pupils is strong because you place the welfare of pupils at the heart of everything you do. Adults form caring and supportive relationships with pupils, which mean that pupils feel safe and well looked after. Parents typically comment that they value the care that you provide for their children. You provide staff with relevant updates to safeguarding training. This means that they know how to recognise when a pupil might be at risk and the actions to take to refer any concerns that they might have. You do not hesitate to refer concerns to outside agencies when specialist advice and support is required. You monitor and follow up your actions to check that they are making a difference. You carry out the necessary checks to make sure that all adults working in the school are safe to work with children. You record this information on the school's single central record.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would be to find out how effectively the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 promotes strong progress. This is because, over time, the proportion of pupils who achieve well in key stage 2 is

below average. Your self-evaluation and school development plan accurately identify the need to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. You have taken action to ensure that teachers help pupils to develop, apply and consolidate their skills in mathematics. For example, Year 5 pupils apply their knowledge of short division to find fractions, such as one third of 72. However, plans to improve the monitoring of teaching in mathematics do not identify precisely which aspects of teaching need to improve. This limits how well leaders can evaluate the impact of any improvements on pupils' progress.

- Reviews of your latest assessment information and pupils' learning confirm that teaching in mathematics does not routinely promote strong progress. This is because teachers' assessment does not accurately pinpoint what pupils already know, understand and can do. As a result, the work that teachers provide for pupils is not sufficiently challenging and pupils frequently repeat skills that they have already secured. This restricts how well they achieve. Consequently, approximately one third of key stage 2 pupils are currently working at standards below those typical for their age in mathematics.
- My second line of enquiry was to determine how effectively teaching supports pupils who need to catch up. You know your pupils well, which helps you to identify when pupils need more help. For instance, you have identified that some pupils who achieved well at the end of key stage 1 have not sustained effective progress. You have secured extra funding for additional teaching to support pupils with gaps in their learning. Additional adults model learning effectively and ask questions to support pupils' understanding. This helps pupils to think carefully and focus on their learning. Extra teaching helps some pupils to make good progress. However, outcomes for pupils who need to catch up remain inconsistent. Evaluations of the impact of additional teaching are not sufficiently well focused to identify when teaching needs to be adapted. As a result, several pupils are still behind in their learning.
- My final line of enquiry was to establish if the teaching of writing in both key stages improved in 2018, following a decline in 2017. Effective teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling ensures that pupils consistently achieve well in this subject. Last year, pupils' achievement in writing at the end of both key stages improved. Pupils enjoy using their vocabulary to good effect. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoy writing sentences such as: 'I saw a dinosaur scurrying towards a scrumptious cake.' However, reviews of pupils' learning and your latest assessment information confirm that pupils' achievement is not consistent. This is because pupils do not routinely apply their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing. For example, younger pupils who can already use full stops and capital letters accurately continue to work on this target. As a result of variable teaching, approximately one quarter to one third of pupils are working at standards below those typical for their age.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- precisely targeted teaching supports the progress of pupils who need to catch up
- teachers' assessment more consistently takes account of what pupils can already do, especially in mathematics, so that pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable
- the teaching of writing routinely supports pupils to apply the skills that they have already secured so that they consistently achieve well
- subject leaders develop their monitoring and evaluation of teaching so that they swiftly intervene when teaching needs to improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I had several meetings with you. I had a meeting with subject leaders for mathematics and English, during which we carried out a joint review of pupils' work in mathematics and writing. I held separate meetings with a group of governors and also met with the local authority's advisory headteacher. I checked the school's single central record and we reviewed your safeguarding procedures and documents. We discussed the school's latest assessment information and the school's self-evaluation and development priorities. Together, we observed pupils' learning in mathematics in key stage 2. I observed the teaching of writing in a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. I spoke informally with several pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime to gain their views of the school. I talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered 62 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also took account of 40 additional free-text comments. I reviewed 17 responses to the online pupil survey and nine responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.