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Adam Smith
Headteacher
Chilmark and Fonthill Bishop Church of England Aided Primary School
The Street
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Dear Mr Smith

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chilmark and Fonthill Bishop Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, there have been some staffing changes. A new teacher started in the spring term of 2020. The school's senior teacher is now the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, having taken over this role from the headteacher.

Main findings

Leaders are working systematically to tackle the weaknesses identified at the time of the last section 5 inspection. Prompt action was taken to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills required to deliver education remotely during the pandemic. This resulted in positive pupil engagement throughout.

You have high expectations of both pupils and staff. You prioritise improvements in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. Staff are using assessment well to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They put in the necessary support to enable pupils to catch up quickly. Alongside this, a clear emphasis is placed on ensuring pupils' well-being, including their mental health. Parents speak highly of both this and the academic support the school provides.

Actions to strengthen the teaching of reading are having a positive impact. Teachers are passionate that all pupils should be confident readers and enjoy reading for pleasure. New library facilities and high-quality reading materials are enabling pupils to experience a range of texts to support their reading development. Phonics is taught systematically. Additional training in the teaching of phonics is strengthening staff subject knowledge. Teachers are making precise assessments to check pupils' phonic knowledge.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy their work in mathematics. They talk confidently about what they already know and can do and how this helps them when they come across new content. However, this is not as evident within other subjects in the wider curriculum. Teachers have begun to identify the key content that pupils need to know in some subjects such as history and art. You are making this curriculum development work a priority so that pupils are better prepared for their next stage of education. However, this work remains in its infancy.

Subject leaders are keen to become experts in their fields. However, they still lack confidence in their own subject knowledge. This hinders their ability to monitor and support the work of others.

Governors are becoming increasingly skilled in challenging school leaders and holding them to account. They understand the priorities for the school in relation to the wider curriculum.

Additional support

The local authority continues to provide helpful support and challenge for leaders, including governors. Staff benefit from training and monitoring from external consultants to build upon the school's improvement work.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, staff, pupils, representatives of those responsible for governance, the phonics and early reading consultant and representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read, and reviewed school documentation, including governors' minutes and monitoring documents from the local authority. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 15 free-text responses, as well as seven staff questionnaires.

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 reports website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barraclough
Her Majesty's Inspector