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Miss Jody Harris  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Harris

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chickerell Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in September 2016, the academy was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum in key stage 2
- improve the presentation, accuracy and overall quality in some pupils' mathematics workbooks in key stage 2.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held several meetings with you. I also met other senior leaders, including the deputy headteacher, assessment leader and assistant headteacher, to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. Furthermore, I spoke with your mathematics and English subject leaders and four representatives of the governing body. I also met your external adviser and the headteacher of a local primary school who has worked closely with you to provide additional challenge and support. Together, we visited every class in key stage 2 and reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks. I took this opportunity to talk with some pupils about their learning. I completed a brief visit to key stage 1 and the early years with your deputy headteacher and assessment leader to look more widely at the quality of provision across the school. Finally, I spoke with some parents to consider their views about the school and how it is improving since the previous section 5 inspection.

## **Context**

There have been few changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection. Teachers are positive and embrace the well-targeted ideas, training and support provided by senior leaders. Five teachers have benefited from this focused support. You reviewed the effectiveness of the senior leadership team and took the decision to make some key changes. These included reducing the overall size of the team and bringing in the inclusion leader. Following maternity leave, the assistant headteacher has also returned to her post on the leadership team, which has bolstered capacity and its effectiveness. Governors completed a review of governance in February 2017. The external review of the spending of the pupil premium funding was completed in September 2017. Following the previous inspection, your school has worked closely with the Chesil Education Partnership and the Wimborne Teaching Alliance to take steps in addressing the areas for improvement.

## **Main findings**

You and other leaders are working effectively to remedy the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Plans are focused on the right priorities and you have ensured that training and professional development are well matched to these. For example, the extensive work through the 'Jurassic hub' for mathematics is raising the quality of teaching in this subject in key stage 2. As a result, teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able. Pupils I spoke with are showing an increasing ability to justify their thinking and reasoning. Furthermore, the work between key stage leaders in mathematics and English, overseen effectively by the assessment leader, has led to beneficial learning between staff in key stages 1 and 2. This is ensuring that teaching is being strengthened across the school.

The training and trust you invest in other leaders are having a positive impact. You have a dedicated team of leaders, including governors, who are working well together to improve the school. You have ensured that leaders have clear lines of accountability and know their responsibilities. This means that leaders are not only attending well to individual priorities, but they are also bringing information back together and sharing this to evaluate their work and findings. For example, the inclusion leader is working with others to introduce interventions and additional provision, such as a breakfast club and further literacy support for disadvantaged pupils. This is now having a discernible impact on targeted pupils' attendance and achievement. In other ways, leaders are being proactive in a bid to accelerate pupils' progress. For example, the appointment of an additional teacher in Year 6 has meant that pupils are being taught in small groups of 19. This is also enabling pupils to benefit from teaching which is better matched to their needs.

Following the previous inspection, governors recognised that they had to improve and, as the chair of the governing board told me, have 'upped their game'. As a result, they have introduced new ways of working to provide them with accurate information about the school. For example, governors introduced a school improvement committee and now attend weekly senior leadership team meetings. Minutes and records show that governors ask questions and challenge leaders. They want to know about the impact of strategies and take the lead in requesting information, such as, 'When will it be known whether this approach to mathematics is working?' Governors also ask for regular updates with presentations from senior leaders to keep them informed about pupils' progress. This means they are now asking questions about particular groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who should attain greater depth, to address long-standing weaknesses in the school. Together with other leaders, they are analysing and reviewing information, which is helpful in informing their decisions and adapting to the needs of the school.

We looked closely at the points arising from the previous inspection and agreed that there are still some key areas to continue improving before the next section 5 inspection. These include improving the quality of writing for pupils across the curriculum. This is especially so that pupils can write freely and in greater depth in other subjects, such as science and the humanities, in key stage 2. We also agreed that there are some occasions when the quality of presentation and accuracy in pupils' mathematics workbooks let a few pupils down and reduce the overall quality of their work in key stage 2.

### **External support**

Leaders have used the range of external support well to bring about key improvements in the school. This has been well directed and targeted to the areas for improvement on the school's learning plan. As a result of effective training, leaders have a good understanding of their areas, including mathematics and English subject leaders. Leaders are showing increasing confidence and assurance in making their own decisions and are less reliant on external support. Governors

now provide valuable support and challenge to school leaders. Following the disbandment of the Chesil Education Partnership, the school is still engaging in training and partnership working with other local primary schools, including an outstanding primary school. Leaders have used support effectively to add rigour to the school's systems and in ensuring that their work is externally moderated and validated.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**