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27 March 2019

Mrs Fay White  
Interim Executive Headteacher  
Bream Church of England Primary School  
High Street  
Bream  
Lydney  
Gloucestershire  
GL15 6JW

Dear Mrs Fay White

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bream Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 March 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 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.

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 good.

The school should take further action to:

- further develop governors' skills so they are able to challenge and support senior leaders effectively
- ensure that pupils extend the range of punctuation they typically use.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection I met with you to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I observed learning in a range of classes with one of your deputies. I

met with a representative of the local authority and with two of your governors. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime and looked at examples of their work. I evaluated a range of documents, including information about the attainment of current pupils, minutes of governing body meetings and information about rates of pupils' attendance.

## **Main findings**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in November 2018, you have continued to provide strong, stable leadership for the school. When you arrived, you introduced new systems for monitoring the performance of the school. At the previous inspection, these systems were in their infancy. Now they are well established. They have improved the quality of teachers' work and the rate of pupils' progress.

You model high expectations to all staff. This has led to teachers expecting more of their pupils. Senior leaders, local authority officers and external consultants have provided training for teachers. Teachers' skills have improved. For example, teachers' medium-term planning for teaching writing has improved and this has led to greater consistency across the school in pupils' experience of writing.

The school's assessments show that pupils' attainment in writing has improved significantly since last year. Pupils are using basic punctuation well. However, pupils do not yet use a wide enough range of punctuation in their writing.

Many pupils commented that they are reading more now than they used to in the past. They are enjoying the new books you have provided for them. Teaching of reading is now more structured. Teachers choose challenging texts to study and successfully link the themes in them to other parts of the curriculum. For example, pupils have produced good work based on 'The Pearl Diver'.

Pupils' progress in mathematics continues to improve. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching closely to check that curriculum plans are being put into practice. Teachers are using newly bought resources to ensure that pupils are taught effectively. Recent assessments indicate that more of the most able pupils in key stage 2 are attaining the higher standard in mathematics than at the first monitoring inspection. The school's calculation policy is outdated. Senior leaders, in collaboration with staff, are in the process of rewriting it.

You recognise that, having secured better teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, the development of other parts of the curriculum is a necessary next step. Staff morale is high. You have given teachers a renewed sense of purpose and so they are keen to be involved in the development of the wider curriculum.

Children in the Reception class continue to learn well, because of the positive atmosphere staff have developed. Children feel well supported and well looked after. They are willing to play and share together. Staff provide imaginative displays

in the Reception classroom and renew them regularly. Consequently, the indoor environment is welcoming and interesting for children. The new outdoor area is well used, but the poor quality of some of the equipment limits its usefulness. Parents of children in the Reception class commented that they are very satisfied with the quality of teaching and care their children are receiving.

The rate of Year 6 pupils' attendance is above the national average. Nevertheless, the rate of pupils' attendance varies across other year groups and so the overall rate remains below average. The school's family support worker, who is part funded by the church, has built good links with the families of many children in the school. As a result of this work and other measures, you have reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from the school.

With the support of the local authority, the governance of the school is improving. Governors now have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities than at the previous monitoring inspection. Recently, they have had training on the interpretation of data about the performance of the school. Governors are now beginning to ask pertinent questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Even so, they are not yet providing enough challenge to senior leaders over the progress of particular groups of pupils. Governors have begun to consider how the staffing structure of the school can be made more sustainable. This work has begun but has not reached its conclusion yet.

Parents and carers recognise the improvements that have taken place at this school over the last six months since you were appointed. In a recent survey, they expressed great confidence in the school, the leadership team and the staff.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide support and advice for the school through a project group. This group has ensured that communication between the school and the local authority is open and honest. Consequently, the local authority performance adviser understands well the challenges faced by the school and she provides timely and effective guidance. When necessary, she brings advice from other parts of the local authority, such as advice about human resources.

Governors have completed the next phase of training from the local authority. More training is planned. New governor recruits, brokered by the performance adviser, are bringing new expertise and capacity to the governing body.

The local authority has also provided resources for mathematics teaching and high-quality texts for pupils to read. These are helping to motivate pupils in mathematics and reading. A senior leader is taking part in a project to improve pupils' literacy that has been sponsored by the local authority. Together, these actions are helping to sustain the momentum of improvement.

You have ensured that links with staff at Coalway Junior school continue to be used effectively to share good practice in many areas of the curriculum. These links are growing and strengthening, to the benefit of both schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams

**Her Majesty's Inspector**