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Mr Chris Payne
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Payne

Subject inspection of The Batt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 December 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

Leaders are in the process of reviewing the school's curriculum for modern foreign languages (MFL). They have recently introduced a new programme of study for key stage 2 pupils in French. It is ambitious and has very clear end points for what pupils need to know and remember. The programme reflects the requirements of the national curriculum programme of study for MFL. However, leaders and staff know that pupils are not yet able to fully access this curriculum due to weaknesses in language teaching previously. As a result, French lessons this term have focused on reinforcing basic knowledge that pupils should already know.

Leaders want to instil a love of language learning in their pupils. Since September, all pupils in key stage 2 have a timetabled French lesson every week. Following an audit, leaders identified strengths and weaknesses in staff subject knowledge and

confidence in teaching French. A French-speaking member of staff now teaches most key stage 2 classes. This means that there is now a consistent approach to teaching French. Class teachers support the specialist teacher in lessons and aim to develop their skills at the same time.

Younger pupils have opportunities to learn some basic language skills. For example, Year 1 pupils answer the register in French and learn vocabulary for numbers and colours. Last term, they even went on 'trips' to Paris and Florence in their classroom and learned about famous landmarks and European food.

However, these early foundations of French learning have not been built on in the past. Pupils have re-learned vocabulary for numbers, colours, greetings and days of the week throughout key stage 2. This is generally all that pupils have been taught, which does not allow them to develop their language skills effectively. Many pupils have not progressed beyond learning individual words and have very limited grammatical knowledge. The previous curriculum lacked structure and did not match the national curriculum subject content. Pupils are not yet able to build or use simple sentences in French, for example.

The school's new French curriculum is coherent and suitably sequenced to support pupils' learning, but it is not yet being delivered fully. Some topics are chosen to overlap with learning in other lessons. In Year 3, for example, pupils learned about the geography of France, including its main cities and bordering countries. This led to pupils using French to say where people lived. A few topics do not fit into the French curriculum so well, such as learning vocabulary for hunting tools and dwellings in ancient Britain. Leaders need to refine the French curriculum so that all content is meaningful.

Staff ensure that pupils learn how to pronounce French words correctly. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson, for example, could spot patterns between the sounds of words and how they were spelt. Staff use high-quality resources to help pupils develop their listening skills, and they are keen to join in and practise their speaking. Year 6 pupils were very proud to show me videos of their French conversations.

Evidence

I discussed the MFL curriculum with the headteacher and the curriculum leader. I visited French lessons in Year 1 and Years 3 to 6. I met with groups of pupils from Years 4 and 6 and talked to them about their learning. I looked at pupils' work from the lessons I visited. I met with a Year 3 teacher and the member of staff responsible for teaching French in Years 4 to 6. I evaluated the curriculum plans and reviewed video evidence of pupils' spoken French.

Context

The school converted to an academy in 2015 and is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust. There are currently 325 pupils on roll. Key stage 2 has two forms of entry and the rest of the school is single-form entry. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average, as is the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector