

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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15 January 2020

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

Dear Mrs White

**Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Bream Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 January 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in June 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2019.**

- Governors must ensure that those responsible for responding to safeguarding allegations are fully trained to implement the correct procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - governors have the relevant skills and knowledge to hold leaders firmly to account and secure the necessary improvements, including pupils' attendance
  - the pupil premium strategy is fully evaluated to raise the achievement and improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND
  - the curriculum is carefully designed to promote the best possible outcomes for pupils across the range of subjects
  - leaders align their monitoring and evaluation closely to the particular groups or cohorts of pupils that are underachieving the most.
- Further improve pupils' achievement and the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - raising teachers' expectations to address the remaining gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, including the most able pupils
  - ensuring that recently implemented systems to support identified pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and/or those with SEND, work effectively to diminish differences in attainment and progress
  - implementing a robust strategy for the teaching of early reading and phonics so that all pupils, including the lowest-achieving and disadvantaged pupils, read with fluency, confidence and understanding.
- Leaders should ensure that they further improve children's personal, social and emotional development in the early years, particularly those children who are disadvantaged or need further support, to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Leaders should continue to improve pupils' behaviour so that this is consistently good in all classes and situations, particularly in key stage 1.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 9 January 2020**

### **Evidence**

I met with the interim executive headteacher, a senior leader, a group of staff and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I conducted a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I visited lessons in Years 1, 2 and 4 and in the early years. I visited the playground at lunchtime to observe pupils' behaviour. The single central record was checked, and the school's safeguarding procedures scrutinised. I reviewed a range of relevant documentation, including information available on the school's website and other records provided by school leaders.

### **Context**

Since mid-November 2019, the deputy headteacher with responsibility for Year 4 has been absent. The Year 2 teacher, who is also a senior leader, has taken responsibility for the Year 4 class. Year 2 are currently being taught by a temporary teacher. A part-time member of staff, with responsibility for science, left in July 2019.

There have been some changes to governance. Two governors' terms of office ended in November 2019. A new parent governor has been appointed and has taken up post. A new clerk has been appointed and is due to start this term.

The interim executive headteacher's post has been extended until mid-February 2020. Plans for the school to become an academy are at a very early stage. Potential sponsors have not yet been identified.

This school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in July 2019.

### **The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection**

Leaders have acted promptly to overhaul the school's safeguarding procedures. A range of safeguarding policies have been revised and refreshed. Key policies, such as those relating to safeguarding and child protection and managing allegations against staff, are now compliant. Alongside these improvements, the school's training programme has intensified. For instance, the headteacher, who also acts as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), has attended and benefited from useful training about the management of allegations against staff. Those who are responsible make appropriate use of the local authority's designated safeguarding officer (LADO) should the need arise. This aspect of the school's work is much improved.

Further improvements to the school's approach to keeping pupils safe are taking hold. The local safeguarding board has conducted a full review of the school's safeguarding procedures. Many recommendations, such as those relating to specific training about child sexual exploitation, have been completed. Leaders plan to cascade this training to all staff. Staff now log all concerns about pupils' welfare using a new electronic system. All have received useful training. Although leaders make sure that concerns are actioned appropriately, there are some gaps in the recording of this information. Leaders now need to ensure that pupils' chronologies are kept up to date and contain all the necessary information.

The school's curriculum has been overhauled and redesigned. A new 2-year rolling curriculum has been introduced. Staff are demonstrating an understanding of progression within their curriculum planning. Leaders' monitoring is now more extensive, including for the performance of different groups. Pupils' achievement is rising in some phases, such as the early years. This is because leaders' expectations are higher than has been the case in the past. For instance, most children achieved a good level of development in 2019. This was a significant improvement when compared to 2018. Everyone is buoyed up with the opportunities that the new curriculum affords. Nevertheless, more is needed to improve the quality of the implementation of the school's curriculum, particularly in key stage 1.

Staff have received supportive training in the teaching of phonics. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants have a secure grasp of what is required, such as the skills of pronouncing sounds clearly. Children in the early years are effectively developing their skills of segmenting and blending when reading unknown words. Leaders have also initiated a review of the school's reading materials. In the early years, books are now precisely matched to children's stage of reading development. Pupils across the school are reading more frequently. In addition, the curriculum is now enhanced with the introduction of high-quality texts. Overall, staff are placing a much stronger and appropriate emphasis on pupils reading widely and often.

Leaders are highlighting more strongly the importance of attending school regularly. This aspect is improving securely. The school's rate of persistent absence has reduced, as well as that of unauthorised absence. Leaders are now more proactive at engaging families and promoting pupils' attendance. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is improving, and more pupils are arriving on time.

Staff have been appointed to lead on improvements to playtimes and pupils' behaviour. A thorough action plan is in place that includes developments such as zoning the playground. This will provide pupils with greater activity choices. Nevertheless, this work is at an early stage. New teaching arrangements and a change of classroom for some year groups have all contributed to improvements in pupils' learning behaviours. In key stage 2 classes, pupils are settled, work purposefully and collaborate well with one another. In key stage 1, more is required to ensure that pupils are fully engaged with learning and concentrate on the task in hand.

Leaders have developed a much clearer focus on how well different pupil groups are achieving. Teachers also have a better awareness of which pupils need to catch up. They are targeting their questioning more judiciously. Interventions have been introduced and targeted to where they are needed most. Pupils who need to catch up are being better supported. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this work.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school**

The quality of governance is strengthening. For some time, the governing body has been without the support of a clerk. This has hindered its work. Pleasingly, an experienced clerk has been appointed and will start work shortly. Governors are now clearer on how to align their work better to leaders' school improvement priorities. Also, governors' visits now serve greater purpose. For instance, governors are monitoring pupils' attendance more closely and they know that this is an improving aspect. In addition, recently recruited new governors bring strength and expertise, including in their oversight of safeguarding.

Governors have made sure that they hold useful and pertinent responsibilities. For instance, a governor is now allocated the responsibility of overseeing leaders' use of pupil premium funding. Governors have ensured that they work alongside school leaders, so they are well informed about how the school is using additional funding.

Leaders have established a well-thought-through plan for raising achievement. Clear and appropriate actions are identified and matched well against the areas that require improvement. Actions are staggered appropriately, and relevant success criteria are in place. The interim executive headteacher knows the school well. Staff are fully supportive and enthusiastic about playing their part in helping the school to improve. A strong team ethic is highly evident.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Leaders and governors are determined to improve the school. All are very committed to the local community and serving pupils well. Everyone has embraced the additional help that they are receiving from the local authority and other partners. This support is making a positive difference.
- New safeguarding systems are now more effective than in the past. Leaders are keeping a close oversight on this aspect and taking appropriate action when the need arises.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Leaders have overhauled the school's safeguarding policies and processes thoroughly. However, sometimes, their actions are not recorded. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' chronologies are complete.
- Progress towards academisation is too slow. An appropriate sponsor has not yet been identified. The interim executive headteacher is in a temporary role. Furthermore, the absence of the substantive deputy headteacher has unavoidably reduced leadership capacity. Responsible stakeholders need to ensure that a long-term solution is sought more urgently.

### **External support**

A range of appropriate support has been galvanised and is complementing school priorities well. The local authority is providing wise counsel and playing a helpful role in supporting the school to improve. A national leader of education is providing helpful support in the development of the teaching of reading. Staff found a recent phonics training session helpful in refreshing their skills. Other support to aid the school in developing the curriculum is forthcoming from both the mathematics and English partnerships in the local area.

A local authority safeguarding officer has conducted a helpful audit of the school's safeguarding procedures. This has helped leaders hone in on where priorities lie. Recommendations are being acted upon and, as a result, the school's safeguarding procedures have strengthened.

Subject leaders and staff are benefiting from the expertise and joined-up working with the interim executive headteacher's other school. Staff have benefited from observing one another teach as part of both schools' training programme. Teaching assistants have also received helpful training.