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Miss Emma Miller
Headteacher
Escrick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Carr Lane
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Dear Miss Miller

No formal designation inspection of Escrick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 2020, 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. The subject in focus was languages.

Main findings

You and other leaders have been focusing on developing the curriculum in subjects other than languages. For example, since your appointment you have been looking at the quality of the curriculum in English, mathematics and science. You have only very recently turned your attention to languages. You know that you are only at the beginning of a journey in as far as French is concerned.

Plans to improve the curriculum in French have been prepared. There has been a recent change of subject leader. The assistant headteacher is also spearheading the development of French at school. Work is underway to enhance the status of the subject. However, much of this work is in its infancy.

You have shown a level of commitment to French. All pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 now have regular French lessons. Pupils have one 45-minute lesson per fortnight. French is taught by class teachers. They use a scheme of work that provides lesson plans, overviews, sound files and teaching resources to support them. The scheme builds upon knowledge step by step. It includes planning for progression in phonics, grammar and vocabulary.

However, over time there has not been sufficient focus on French. It has not been prioritised in a way which has enabled pupils to retain vocabulary and structures in their long-term memory. Lessons have not been regular. You accept that professional development in this subject has been limited. The impact of this is clear. Currently, Year 6 pupils can only recall some very basic vocabulary and respond to a few simple rehearsed question and answer exchanges. Their understanding of the sound–spelling link in French is limited. They have very limited understanding of simple grammar. They cannot alter simple sentences to express their own views. Their knowledge has not built over time as intended by the curriculum.

Pupils have had little in the way of opportunities to extend their spoken or written French. Currently, Year 3 pupils are creating sentences that are similar in complexity to those written by pupils in Year 6. Assessment is in its infancy. Many pupils do not have their own books or notes. A 'class book' is used to record what has been covered in class. This does not help teachers to know where individual pupils are in their language learning. Currently, the curriculum that has been provided does not match the demands of the national curriculum. Nor does it reflect the ambition that is in the school's chosen scheme of work for French.

Green shoots are in evidence. Your assistant headteacher understands what progress looks like in languages and is beginning to share this across the school. Pupils are interested in languages, very enthusiastic about learning and want to do their best. You are now turning your attention to languages as part of your programme of school improvement.

Evidence

I met with you, the assistant headteacher and the curriculum leader for French. I visited French lessons that included pupils from Year 3, 5 and 6. I looked at pupils' work that was available. This included some work from lessons that I visited. I spoke with three groups of pupils about their learning in French and we looked at their work together. I spoke to the class teachers whose lessons I visited. I evaluated the curriculum plans, policies and development plans for languages.

Context

Escrick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are currently 154 pupils on roll. The proportion

of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. Overall, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils with education, health and care plans, is below average.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle
Her Majesty's Inspector