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Scott Martland
Ashton-on-Ribble St Andrew's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mr Martland

No formal designation inspection of Ashton-on-Ribble St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 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 have prioritised the development of the curriculum for French this year. You acknowledge that the school is on the beginning of a journey with regard to languages. Inspection evidence concurs. Leaders, staff and pupils are enthusiastic and committed to French. However, curriculum planning is not accurate enough. Subject leaders and teachers do not have a consistently strong understanding of how to build pupils' knowledge in French step by step.

French has been taught to all year groups at key stage 2 for several years. You identified French as a key priority in September 2019. You strengthened curriculum leadership in this area. Two colleagues have responsibility for French. These teachers have allotted time each term to monitor and develop the curriculum for languages. There is also a rolling programme of time allocated for subject leaders to

spend a full day to work together on curriculum planning for their subject. Such was the desire to focus on languages that French was the first subject for this rolling programme.

The new leadership has refreshed the subject. A review of the curriculum for French has led to a sharper emphasis on the vocabulary that is taught. The French words that teachers introduce are now planned more logically. Pupils meet certain prescribed words repeatedly across the key stage. This helps pupils to successfully store these words in their long-term memories. This system has only recently started. During my visit I saw that teachers are generally effective at introducing and practising vocabulary in lessons.

However, curriculum planning does not emphasise grammar or the sound-spelling link enough. This has been the case for a few years. Pupils can recall some pieces of vocabulary. They can also participate in simple rehearsed question-and-answer exchanges. However, their pronunciation is often weak. In addition, they are not able to produce simple sentences independently with confidence or accuracy. When given support, pupils can put together simple paragraphs that contain different ideas and structures. They do this by 'cutting and pasting' sentences. Yet, their ability to use high-frequency verbs and their basic grammatical understanding are limited.

Teachers are committed to the subject. They are passionate and enthusiastic when teaching this subject. This enthusiasm is having a positive impact on pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy French lessons. Teachers do not receive enough support to help them to deliver the French curriculum. There are gaps in teachers' knowledge of grammar and the French sound-spelling link. Current curriculum planning also lacks precision in these areas. Plans, therefore, do not support teachers well enough. During my visit I noted that some of the French that pupils were being taught was incorrect.

Where there is absolute clarity in planning, pupils' understanding is stronger. For example, I saw some very precise use of French in the classroom during my visit. Here, the class teacher had identified exactly which command words were going to be used in French during the lesson. Pupils knew these words and responded immediately to the teacher's requests.

However, you were correct to refresh French. Some pupils have wide gaps in their knowledge. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Year 6 pupils are not where they should be in French. Historically, teachers have not helped pupils to build on their knowledge logically or systematically. The curriculum has not matched or exceeded the ambition of the national curriculum in the past. You are aware of this. This is the reason that French is already at the forefront of your improvement planning.

Evidence

I met with you, the chair of governors and your curriculum leaders for French. I visited French lessons in Years 3, 4 and 6 and looked at a selection of pupils' work in French. This included work from lessons that I visited. I spoke with groups of pupils, from all year groups in key stage 2, about their learning in French. I evaluated the curriculum plans, policies and development plans for languages. I spoke about the French curriculum with teachers whose lessons I visited.

Context

Ashton-on-Ribble St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school. There are currently 420 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with SEND, 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 Blackburn, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle

Her Majesty's Inspector