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20 May 2021

Simon Trahern  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Trahern

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Jolesfield CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 6 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- continue to implement planned improvements to the curriculum, consolidate the teaching of reading and introduce further strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the school has recruited a new deputy headteacher, who took up post in September 2020. Two teachers have also gone on maternity leave this academic year. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) left in March 2021. You and your governors have decided to allocate this role to the deputy headteacher, who will formally take up the position in September 2021. During this term, you are leading on all matters relating to SEND provision.

As a consequence of the disruption caused by COVID-19, you delayed some of the planned improvements to the curriculum until March 2021, when all pupils returned to school.

## **Main findings**

You and your leaders have focused sharply on taking the necessary actions to improve the quality of education, staying faithful to the main priorities. This single-mindedness has brought clarity to your planning. It has helped staff concentrate their efforts on what matters most. During the several periods of partial closure, some curriculum improvements have been postponed. Now that everyone is back at school, staff have continued working on these priorities with gusto.

You have made progress in developing a coherent reading strategy in the school. You have invested in a whole new range of reading books that now match accurately the sounds that pupils learn. Pupils benefit from the reading sessions that start each day. Teachers have been successful in engaging parents in following through on their children's reading at home. The reading journals create strong communication between home and school. Pupils enjoy reading and love their new books. Leaders can see improvements in pupils' fluency and understanding as a result of this methodical approach.

Staff are confident and largely consistent in how they now teach pupils to read. This has been a major part of the school's drive to develop reading. Pupils have responded well to the new approach. However, you also recognise that there is more to do. Weaker readers are still not routinely using their decoding skills when they encounter a difficult word. Teachers need to reinforce pupils' blending and segmenting skills further.

Older pupils also enjoy their reading very much. They talk knowledgeably about what they have read for pleasure as well as what they read as a class. They express their opinions fluently and make connections across texts. You have clearly placed a heavy emphasis on improving the range and quality of the books available. Pupils have benefited from the culture of reading that has been created.

Since the return to school for all pupils in March, you have picked up the pace with improvements to the whole curriculum. You have worked with all staff to share your

vision of the new curriculum approach. You have also provided planning time for teachers to reshape units of learning. Staff are fully on board with ensuring a coherent and increasingly ambitious curriculum for pupils. They understand that, while skills are important, it is vital for pupils to remember what they learn.

The deputy headteacher has led on the improvements in science. He has swiftly set about resequencing the content and order of what pupils learn. He has also helped teachers improve their subject knowledge. This refreshed approach has already had a positive impact on pupils' ability to retain what they learn. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were confident in recalling their knowledge of sound. They were also able to use relevant scientific terms with confidence. By September, you plan to have improved all subjects in the curriculum to the same standard as science, mathematics and English. You are on target to achieve this aim.

Following the SENCo's departure at Easter, you and the governing body have reviewed SEND provision. Governors have been keen to move to a more strategic approach to SEND in the school. The deputy headteacher will take up the role of SENCo from September. He will have a team of staff who have developed expertise in key areas. Leaders know that they have not significantly improved SEND provision yet. It was clear from what was seen during the inspection that teachers need more strategies to ensure pupils with SEND are always appropriately supported.

Parents are highly complimentary about what they describe as 'a fantastic school'. Pupils feel happy and valued. Staff are proud to work at the school. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, you have nonetheless kept their focus on improvement. As a result, Jolesfield is on track to becoming a good school at its next full inspection.

### **Additional support**

You have been proactive in securing support from the local authority and the diocese. You have taken advantage of resource that has been given in terms of curriculum training. This has proved influential in the approach the school has taken in revising content and sequencing. The local authority has also committed to supporting the SEND review at the school. It will provide a mentor for the deputy headteacher in his new role as SENCo.

Leaders have also benefited from training and guidance from the Southampton English Hub. This has led to improved staff expertise in the delivery of phonics.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and various school policies were evaluated.

I had discussions with pupils and staff, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 14 free-text responses. I also took account of 14 staff questionnaires and spoke with a small group of staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Yasmin Maskatiya  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**