

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



17 May 2021

Ross Minton  
Headteacher  
Churchfield Church School  
Burham Road  
Highbridge  
Somerset  
TA9 3JF

Dear Mr Minton

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Churchfield Church School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 two 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 the school 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.**

### **Context**

The COVID-19 pandemic has coincided with significant changes to the leadership of the school. You took up post in May 2020. In September 2020, a chief executive officer, a chair of the local governing body and a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) were appointed.

Pupils in the early years foundation stage share part of the site and buildings with Churchfield Nursery.

## **Main findings**

Since arriving at the school, you have created a positive atmosphere. You have invested in training for staff. Consequently, staff feel valued and better able to carry out their roles. Your senior team has helped staff to build more trusting relationships with pupils, parents and the wider community.

Your work to improve the school has gained momentum following the appointment of new personnel to the trust and local governing body. They support and challenge the school effectively. Leaders at all levels are wholly committed to working together.

You have introduced a new behaviour policy. As a result, there is now a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. You have noticed that some pupils need extra help with their mental health as a result of the pandemic. There is well-judged support in place for these pupils, including from community groups and charities.

The teaching of early reading has significantly improved. Leaders across the school are clear that 'if they [pupils] can't read, they can't flourish'. Pupils are developing a love of reading through helpful support from expert staff. They are successful when they read because their books match the sounds that they are taught in class. In addition, leaders have produced video guides to support parents when reading with their children at home.

You have begun a significant piece of work building the school's curriculum 'from the bottom up'. Curriculum leaders have visited lessons in the early years. As a result, they appreciate how pupils first meet some of the ideas and words that they will later build upon. You have started to create a curriculum which considers local needs, placing high value on pupils' communication and language skills from the moment they join you.

In science, history and personal, social and health education, leaders have started to map the knowledge that pupils should gain from each topic. Increasingly, leaders are thinking about the big ideas that pupils will need to revisit, to gain real and lasting understanding. There is some way to go before this process is complete and extends to all subjects within the curriculum.

In phonics and mathematics, teachers use assessment to pinpoint what pupils know. In the wider curriculum, assessment is not so well developed. Teachers do not focus consistently on checking that pupils have learned the most important knowledge. You have begun to address this. For example, in geography, leaders have found that pupils do not remember significant locations well. Teachers now revisit this type of knowledge more often.

Teachers now play a bigger role in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have access to rich information about pupils' strengths and difficulties. Increasingly, staff take the lead, working with parents to agree pupils' targets and plans.

### **Additional support**

The trust arranges periodic evaluation of the school's improvement work. This encourages leaders to usefully refine their curriculum thinking.

Between the trust and the local governing body, there are helpful networks of support for staff with safeguarding responsibilities. This results in a strong shared understanding of local risks and challenges.

The school is in receipt of valuable support from the local English hub. This includes useful oversight of the school's phonics provision, training for staff and access to additional funding.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, the SENCO, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the chair and other representatives of the local governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I also carried out visits to lessons and listened to a small number of pupils read to their teachers. I scrutinised curriculum and school improvement plans. I considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 36 free-text responses, and 45 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Lydia Pride  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**