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Heather Brand  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Brand

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 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:

- ensure that curriculum and assessment plans in foundation subjects identify clearly the knowledge that pupils should learn, and organise this in a way that builds upon what pupils already know and can do.

## **Context**

The chair of the local governing body took on this role in January 2021. Since the previous section 5 inspection, several new members have joined the local governing body.

## **Main findings**

Leaders have been measured in their actions to improve the school. They made some changes quickly to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection in 2019. Leaders have made additional, well-considered changes more recently. These are based on their checks of what still needs to improve. Staff understand the reason for these changes. They feel well supported and support the changes school leaders have made.

Following the previous inspection, leaders changed the approach to the teaching of reading. There is now a consistent approach in place. Staff have had training to improve their knowledge and expertise in teaching reading. This is helping pupils to read with greater fluency and understanding. Pupils enjoy reading. Adults are providing effective support for pupils who need additional help to catch up in their reading.

Teachers have also had training to improve their understanding of teaching mathematics. Teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to solve problems and apply their mathematical knowledge. Pupils told me this helps them to be more confident and secure in their understanding. They enjoy learning mathematics.

Curriculum leaders have had training to help them better understand their responsibilities. In subjects other than English and mathematics, leaders introduced new curriculum plans in September 2020. Some plans do not clearly identify the knowledge that pupils should learn. They do not help teachers to build upon pupils' previous learning effectively. This means pupils' learning is uneven across the curriculum.

In reading, writing and mathematics, teachers use assessments to check pupils' understanding. Teachers adapt their plans to give pupils opportunities to revisit knowledge where necessary. Assessment in other subjects is not fully developed. Teachers do not precisely know what pupils have remembered over time. Leaders do not know whether they need to adapt their curriculum plans to better support pupils' learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their classmates. However, pupils with SEND do not access the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders are ensuring that all staff have training in how to support the learning of pupils with SEND effectively.

Governors ensure that they have the knowledge and skills they need for their roles. Governors are ambitious for pupils. They check regularly that leaders' actions are improving the quality of provision.

### **Additional support**

Leaders make effective use of a wide range of support provided by the trust to improve teaching, curriculum leadership and governance. The area group executive principal (AGEP) meets regularly with leaders to support and challenge them on the impact of their actions on improving the school.

Leaders have benefited from the support of a local teaching school and a national leader of education. This has helped to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers have also benefited from sharing ideas and seeing different approaches to teaching.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the AGEP, staff and pupils. I had telephone conversations with representatives of the trust and the chair of the local governing body to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection.

I visited lessons in all year groups and observed a reading intervention session. I looked at work in pupils' books in a range of subjects. I reviewed leaders' self-evaluation summary and school improvement plan. I reviewed 10 responses to the online staff survey. I considered the 16 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 13 free-text responses.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Norwich Education Academies Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Norwich, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**