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10 June 2021

Helen Mullinger  
St Cuthbert's C of E Junior School  
Keward Avenue  
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Somerset  
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Dear Mrs Mullinger

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Cuthbert's C of E Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 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.**

### **Context**

Since the school's previous section 5 inspection in October 2019, a new senior teacher and a teacher covering a maternity leave have joined the school. There have been some changes to the membership of the board of governors.

## **Main findings**

You and your staff are focused on tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous full inspection. You are beginning to see the impact of your work in key areas, such as reading. Following the additional monitoring visit in February 2021, you adapted action plans to improve provision further, working closely with staff to develop new subject curriculums. Staff say they feel valued and that you have taken their well-being into consideration, while leading improvement at the school.

You rightly acted to prioritise reading as an area for immediate improvement following the previous section 5 inspection. You introduced a new reading programme and trained all staff to teach phonics. You appointed a leader of phonics who monitors the programme so there is greater consistency in your approach. This means you are better placed to identify pupils who need additional support with reading. These pupils have daily phonics sessions that are helping them to become more confident readers.

The teaching of mathematics has improved. You have consulted with a mathematics specialist, who is helping you to develop teachers' mathematical knowledge. You have developed the curriculum in mathematics, so that the knowledge pupils need to learn is more logically sequenced. Teachers are setting work for pupils that is now better matched to the mathematics curriculum plan. Although pupils have a growing security in their mathematical knowledge, they are not always able to recall important concepts. Teachers are not yet using assessment effectively to get to the root of why some pupils struggle to remember.

Leaders have strengthened the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The special educational needs coordinator ensures that teachers are fully informed about the needs of pupils they teach. This is helping staff to plan appropriate learning. Additional support is helping pupils with SEND to become more confident with reading and mathematics.

Following the additional monitoring inspection, you and your team acted quickly to improve the curriculum in subjects across the curriculum. You supported subject leaders to develop curriculum plans that identify the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This is helping pupils to develop their knowledge. For example, in science, pupils are able to talk confidently about the life cycle. However, pupils are not clear about what they are learning in history and some have misconceptions that will not help them to get better in the subject. Subject leaders are not yet checking on the impact of the curriculum to ensure it is effective in helping pupils to know and remember more. With this in mind, you are considering how staff should assess what pupils know in each subject.

Governors responded appropriately following the additional monitoring inspection. They have set clear expectations for leaders to improve the areas prioritised in the action plan and to maintain the current momentum. Governors are posing more

insightful questions that are helping them to hold leaders to account. They provide more challenge about the changes leaders are making and the impact of these changes.

### **Additional support**

You have made strong use of external support provided by the local authority. You have acted on the feedback provided by external advisers. This is helping you to improve curriculum plans and develop teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in reading and mathematics. You are planning to bring in additional support to strengthen the leadership of other subjects.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of staff and representatives of those responsible for governance. I spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I also visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I reviewed school documentation, including school improvement and curriculum plans, governors' reports and minutes. I listened to pupils read. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the staff survey.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, 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

Tracey Reynolds  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**