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Alison Pook
Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School
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Dear Mrs Pook

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 previous inspection, there have been significant changes to leadership and staffing. You were appointed as headteacher in April 2020. Two teachers have joined the school. You have appointed several staff to newly created subject leader roles. There have been several changes to the governing body.

Main findings

You are wholly focused on securing school improvement. You are tackling the areas identified at the previous full inspection with determination. You have made well-informed decisions to prioritise and manage change. For example, you have quickly developed the reading programme to bring greater consistency to phonics teaching. In addition, you have developed key leadership roles that place curriculum development at their heart. These leaders are beginning to have an impact. Staff feel valued and are keen to play their part in improving the school.

The teaching of reading has improved across the school. Newly appointed leaders in early reading and English are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. You have made sure that all staff are well trained to teach phonics. You ensure that books match pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind have appropriate support to help them to keep up. These improvements are helping pupils to become confident readers who enjoy reading.

You have developed better provision in the early years. In the Nursery, children follow a curriculum that provides rich experiences which extend their talk and vocabulary. Children in the Nursery are learning enthusiastically. In Reception, staff check regularly on what pupils know and can do, and modify the curriculum appropriately to meet their needs. Leaders in the Nursery and Reception class work closely together to ensure the curriculum is preparing pupils for the next stage in their learning.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since you enhanced the role of the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo). The school is making effective use of external services so that pupils receive appropriate support. The SENDCo is working closely with staff to develop their expertise so they can more precisely adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.

Your work to improve the reading and mathematics curriculum is having a positive impact. Pupils are becoming more secure in their learning. However, the development of the curriculum in the other subjects has been hindered by interruptions due to COVID-19. The curriculum in these subjects is not yet sequenced effectively, so pupils' knowledge is more disjointed. For example, in history, pupils struggle to connect what they are learning to what they were taught before. This means pupils have a less secure foundation to take next steps in their

learning. You have appointed new subject leaders who are beginning to bring about improvements. For example, pupils can recall important concepts in music. In art, the subject leader has acted on external subject advice to plan a curriculum that identifies the essential knowledge that pupils should learn.

Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide appropriate support and challenge to you. Governors have supported you to make important changes, such as the development of new leadership roles. Governors are developing their understanding of the curriculum, which will help them to hold you and subject leaders to account.

Additional support

You have made effective use of external support and current educational research. You encourage your subject leaders to seek external guidance that will keep them well informed and up to date with subject knowledge. The school has benefited from being part of an English hub. The local authority has provided support that is helping you to prioritise the most pressing areas for improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders, including the SENDCo, and governors. I met with a representative of the Somerset local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Bath and Wells, 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 curriculum plans. 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