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Joanne Morris  
Headteacher  
St Paul's Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Morris

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Paul's Church of England 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.**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- equip staff with the subject-specific knowledge that they need to deliver all aspects of each subject well
- build upon the recently introduced approach to check how well pupils remember what they have learned, so that teachers can help pupils to recall prior knowledge.

## **Context**

No key staff have either left or joined the school since the last inspection. The local authority appointed an interim executive board (IEB) to replace the governing body in January 2020.

## **Main findings**

You have benefited considerably from the support of the local authority and the appointment of an IEB. This support has helped you to develop broad and ambitious improvement plans. You have successfully implemented many aspects of these plans, such as those relating to improving the writing and mathematics curriculums. While your plans to improve the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics are at an earlier stage of development, your actions to date have established a secure foundation for continued improvement.

You have continued to prioritise the teaching of reading. Leaders have identified the gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge resulting from the periods of partial school closure. You have supported staff to adapt the phonics programme accordingly. This has helped pupils to get back on track with their reading. Older pupils at the early stages of reading continue to access the phonics programme.

You have focused on developing the design and delivery of the writing curriculum. This curriculum is planned so that the important key knowledge you want pupils to know and remember is identified. This knowledge has been carefully sequenced and builds on pupils' prior learning. You have ensured that teachers have been suitably trained so that the planned curriculum is delivered consistently well across the school. The pupils whom I spoke with were able to explain how their teachers help them to improve their writing. Work in their books clearly demonstrates the impact of your actions in helping pupils become fluent writers.

You have shown equal determination in bringing about improvements to the way the mathematics curriculum is planned and delivered. As well as introducing pupils to new knowledge, teachers provide them with daily opportunities to recall and use what they have learned before. Teachers check what pupils know and use their findings to adapt plans. There is also a real focus on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. This starts in the early years where children are immersed in a language-rich environment. The children demonstrate their understanding of concepts such as 'first, then and now' and are able to apply this to counting. They are being well prepared for the mathematical challenges of the key stage 1 curriculum.

You have introduced a consistent approach to the way leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics plan their curriculums. Your aim is for pupils to 'see it, say it, learn it, use it'. You ensure that curriculum leaders identify the key vocabulary that pupils are expected to know. Your plans to assess how well pupils

remember what they have learned have only recently been introduced. The pupils whom I spoke to talked about how quizzes are helping them to remember their current learning in subjects such as science. However, their recall of previous learning is less secure.

Some subjects, such as music, are taught by teachers with wide-ranging expert knowledge. In other subjects, such as science, teachers do not have the same level of expertise in all aspects of the subject. Leaders have not provided teachers with sufficient support to develop their subject-specific knowledge. This affects teachers' ability to help pupils deepen their knowledge.

Members of the IEB recognise the improvements that you and other leaders have made since the previous inspection. They are also aware that work remains to be done. They are mindful of staff's well-being and workload. They have considered how governance and leadership can be further strengthened and sustained in the future.

### **Additional support**

Leadership has been strengthened by the support of the local authority, a national leader of education and a local leader of education. Together, this support has helped you to clarify the strategy for improving the school. It has helped you and other leaders to improve the design and delivery of the curriculum in both English and mathematics.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, the national and local leaders of education currently providing support to the school, members of the IEB and representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited writing and mathematics lessons, saw pupils being taught to play the violin and glockenspiel and observed pupils reading with teachers and support staff. I viewed samples of pupils' work and reviewed curriculum plans for writing, mathematics, science and music. I also reviewed the school improvement plan and minutes from IEB meetings.

I took account of 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 13 free-text comments, and nine responses to the staff online survey.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, the director of education for the Diocese of Manchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Stillings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**