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Shelley England  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs England

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Martin's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 June 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 plans for all subjects are fully implemented
- strengthen subject leadership and develop teachers' expertise, especially in the teaching of phonics
- improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.

## **Context**

Following the last section 5 inspection, the head of school and several teachers left. The school was led by an interim head of school and provided with support by leaders in the trust, including the chief executive officer, and an assistant headteacher. In September 2020, you joined the school as the new headteacher. In addition, a new chair of governors joined in October 2020. As well as changes to senior leadership and governance, five new teachers and a new family liaison officer have joined the school.

## **Main findings**

Since joining the school, you have stabilised and strengthened the leadership and staffing. You have prioritised getting the right staff into the right positions, at all levels. Staff embrace the changes and support the actions of leaders. You are building a community that has high aspirations and expectations for pupils. Together, you are tackling the areas identified for improvement at a steady pace. You have plans in place to strengthen the leadership of subject areas further, but it is too soon to see the impact of these.

Last year, you carried out work with subject experts in the trust to redevelop the curriculum. You now have a curriculum that is well thought out in all subject areas. Curriculum plans make clear the knowledge and skills pupils will learn. They are well organised and build on what pupils already know. Plans build gradually to ensure that pupils are well prepared for future learning. Staff receive regular training and support to develop their subject expertise. They feel well supported and empowered to teach a broad range of subjects. The impact of the pandemic means the curriculum plans are not yet fully implemented. You are aware of this and are taking the right steps, prioritising this now and in the next academic year.

You have a clear vision for teaching and learning. You have created an atmosphere in classrooms where no time is wasted and the focus is on learning. There are many new routines, which pupils are familiar with. As a result, there is greater consistency across classrooms. Recently, you have invested in training to develop planning, teaching and assessment. Teachers use this training well, which means pupils are learning more. You recognise the improvements made, but continue to focus on raising standards further.

Reading is a priority and the phonics programme is well established. Reading books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know. Adults listen to pupils read regularly. Leaders frequently check pupils progress. Pupils who fall behind receive extra teaching. Staff have had training to deliver the phonics programme, leading to consistency of teaching across groups, although the weakest readers are not catching up fast enough. In addition, leaders do not check the quality of phonics teaching robustly enough, checking the programme is being taught as intended.

Pupils' absence and persistent absence remain too high. You are aware of this and have adopted many approaches to tackle it. The new family liaison officer has given greater capacity to your pastoral team. The team communicates well and is proactive in addressing pupils' needs.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She has improved systems for identification, assessment and support. Pupils with SEND have their learning needs met well. Parents are extremely happy with the support provided for their children. The SENCo works as part of the pastoral team. This team has prioritised supporting pupils affected by the pandemic. It works well with partner agencies to identify and respond to pupils with mental ill health.

Those responsible for governance hold leaders to account and support them to lead school improvement. They undertake regular monitoring and feedback. They understand the priorities of the school and have recently undertaken training to help them fulfil their roles.

### **Additional support**

The school has used the support of the trust well to make improvements to the curriculum. This support has been of key importance in the redevelopment of the curriculum. Many staff in the trust have provided interim support in times of staff changes. This has enabled school improvement to continue with as little disruption as possible. The school has used the support of the diocese in the last year. For example, youth workers have worked on site, giving extra capacity to the school.

The school has also had support from a national leader of education. This leader has carried out a review of the school's performance. There are plans to continue to use this support.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, pupils, staff and those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I also looked at examples of learning and visited lessons. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to the staff survey.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the St Barnabas Church of England multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jen Gibbs  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**