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10 January 2023

Sarah Martin  
Headteacher  
Castle Cary Community Primary School  
Park Street  
Castle Cary  
Somerset  
BA7 7EH

Dear Mrs Martin

## **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Castle Cary Community Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 10 January 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other staff, governors and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, listened to pupils read, met with a group of pupils about their learning, looked at a sample of books and scrutinised curriculum documents and the school development plan. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Castle Cary Community Primary School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.**

The school should take further action to:

- evaluate the impact of the recently revised early years curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils
- ensure that systems for assessing what pupils know and can do are embedded across all wider curriculum subjects.

## **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, there have been several staff changes. Two new teachers and six teaching assistants joined the school since September 2022.

You, along with your staff, have focused on addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. You have raised the profile of reading in the early years. The important words that children should learn and how they develop their understanding of the books they are reading have been clearly identified. This is starting to make a difference. When listening to stories, children confidently explain their understanding of new words and use this knowledge well when describing the important features of texts.

Your work to overhaul the wider curriculum is starting to have a positive impact. You have ensured that the important knowledge and vocabulary pupils must know and remember is clear. As a result, learning is now better broken down into smaller steps. Older pupils I spoke to are positive about their learning and can confidently recall what they have been taught.

You have recently put in place a clear monitoring schedule so that leaders can assure themselves as to how well pupils learn the curriculum. Leaders are beginning to develop a better understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved. For example, they understand that systems to assess what pupils know in many wider curriculum subjects are in their infancy and are not yet sufficiently robust.

You are supported and held to account well by governors. They use their expertise to routinely check that the actions that you and other leaders are taking are making a difference. You value the support and challenge provided by local school leaders and the local authority. You say that this has helped you to lead more strategically and to accurately quality assure the education that pupils receive. Staff are positive and clear about their roles. They value the training and time they receive to carry out their roles effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Ben Jordan  
**His Majesty's Inspector**