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Natalie Johnson
Headteacher
Bicton CofE Primary School and Nursery
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Dear Mrs Johnson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Bicton CofE Primary School and Nursery

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 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 your deputy headteacher, other subject leaders, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body 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 listened to pupils reading to a known adult, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at samples of pupils' work and scrutinised documents, including safeguarding documents. I have considered all of these actions in coming to my judgement.

Bicton CofE Primary School and Nursery 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:

- ensure that leaders identify the precise knowledge and skills they want pupils to know and that staff have the knowledge they need to deliver this learning effectively

- ensure that teachers check if pupils have understood what they have been taught and use this information to adapt their teaching or revisit previous learning where necessary.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of changes to staffing and governance, including changes in subject leadership and the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has meant that some of the progress in developing the curriculum slowed. However, in recent months, leaders have worked hard to accelerate the development of subject leadership across the school. This is now paying off. Leaders have a more secure understanding of the current strengths and areas for development in their subjects.

You are taking effective action to improve the quality of education. This includes prioritising the teaching of early reading. You have ensured that all staff are well trained in the school's approach to teaching phonics. All staff receive regular updates and coaching from the reading leader and an external reading consultant. The reading leader has worked with all staff to ensure that the scheme is being implemented consistently. You have ensured that the books pupils read are closely matched to sounds they are learning.

You have ensured that all pupils, including those with SEND, get the support they need to catch up with their peers. This is the case in reading and across the curriculum. However, at times, opportunities are missed to check if pupils fully understand their learning and if any misconceptions need to be addressed when they arise. This means that some pupils do not learn as quickly as you would like.

You have worked closely with subject leaders to ensure they have a clearer understanding of their roles and how their actions impact on the quality of education in their subjects. You have strengthened the systems for monitoring the quality of subjects. Subject leaders regularly visit lessons and talk to pupils about their learning. This has helped subject leaders to have a more accurate view of their subjects, and this is reflected in the more detailed action plans.

You have thought about what you want pupils to learn. Curriculum plans are in place for all subject areas. You have begun to think about the sequence of learning and how it builds on what pupils have learned previously. However, there is still work to do to ensure that the curriculum clearly identifies the precise knowledge that pupils should learn in all subjects.

Governors are clear about their role. They are working hard to develop a more strategic approach when holding leaders to account for the quality of learning in the school. They are mindful of leaders' and staff's well-being. Governors understand many of the school's priorities and challenge leaders on the impact of their decisions and actions.

You have worked closely with the local authority school improvement partner and have benefited from this support.

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

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris

His Majesty's Inspector