

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



6 October 2023

Jamie Caswell  
Executive Headteacher  
West Chinnock Church of England Primary School  
Scotts Way  
West Chinnock  
Crewkerne  
Somerset  
TA18 7PU

Dear Mr Caswell

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of West Chinnock Church of England Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 13 and 14 September 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 was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in October 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, governors, staff 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 met with pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, scrutinised documents and spoke to the supporting multi-academy trust. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as requiring special measures.**

**The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.**

## **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

Following the inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. The school's leadership model has been restructured throughout. You have identified new lines of responsibility by aligning leadership roles with the other school in the federation. With external support, you have identified the priorities for improvement. This focuses on curriculum, leadership and early years education. You have set out the actions needed to bring about improvement and communicated them clearly.

Leaders and staff have worked collaboratively to plan a curriculum which identifies the essential knowledge pupils will learn. With external guidance, the school has put in place a curriculum covering the ambitions of the national curriculum. You have reset the expectations for subject leadership. Staff have received training to help them plan the curriculum. Leaders support and model this work effectively for others. Even so, some subject areas have advanced further in their curriculum thinking than others.

The school supports teachers to develop their subject knowledge and understanding of the new curriculum. However, this is in its infancy, with the new curriculum just beginning to be implemented from this academic year. Staff are positive about the support they receive to teach the new curriculum.

Pupils talk about their learning with some confidence. They describe what they have learned recently and its relevance to what they are learning next. Leaders give careful consideration to the texts pupils read and what teachers focus on as the important things for pupils to know. The school is planning to monitor how well the new curriculum is implemented and how well pupils are learning. It has made sure that systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are in place. Professional development has helped staff to focus on appropriate targets to support pupils. However, there is more to do to help staff adapt the curriculum effectively. Some pupils do not experience the full curriculum. For these pupils, there is a lack of clarity about what they should learn and how the curriculum is adapted.

The school has sought external help to develop the English curriculum. It has used this to develop a more cohesive approach for reading. This is now more ambitious and structured. Pupils now have access to a bigger range of diverse texts. The school has created reading areas that pupils enjoy using. Teachers choose texts carefully. They make sure pupils have the word knowledge they need to understand them. Pupils appreciate the improvements in the reading curriculum. They are beginning to enjoy reading more than in the past. Leaders are now focused on evaluating the texts pupils read and how well they prepare pupils for learning in the future.

The school has invested in the early years. It commissioned an external review and subsequently provided more resources and training for staff. Leaders are developing an early years curriculum that provides children with the foundational steps they need. A range of learning activities and learning spaces, such as a reading corner and a place for creative play, are being developed. As with other parts of the curriculum, this is only just

being implemented. There is work to do to develop further staff expertise in the early years curriculum. However, staff feel well supported in this process.

As part of the leadership changes, the governing body has changed significantly. It has engaged in training and support. As a result, governors are clear about how they assure themselves of the impact of the improvement work of the school. Working with a core group chaired by the local authority, governors now have greater understanding of the school's work. Alongside the work to support and drive the changes at the school, governors listen to staff. They are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Governors have been diligent in identifying and working with a multi-academy trust they plan to join. They are positive about this work and the benefits of joining the trust soon.

During the monitoring visit, I was made aware of a serious safeguarding incident that occurred since the previous inspection. There was a significant lapse in the school's safeguarding procedures. The incident was discussed with the school and the local authority. I am assured that lessons have been learned by the school. The school is now working with the local authority to ensure that all staff act in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

The school is appreciative of the external support it has received. The core group has supported leaders to be more transparent in their evaluation of the school. A local multi-academy trust, through a bespoke training package, has enabled leaders to hone their planning. The school has used this support wisely. It has ensured leaders break down what needs to happen next into manageable steps. Leaders are positive about the support and say it has energised them.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, 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

Rachel Hesketh  
**His Majesty's Inspector**