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26 September 2017

Mrs Paula Scattergood  
Christ Church CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Scattergood

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Christ Church CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection in January 2014, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other leaders and staff, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I undertook brief visits to lessons for all year groups, accompanied by senior leaders, and looked at examples of pupils' work. I evaluated a range of documents and records, including the school's action plan, information about pupils' outcomes and external reviews of teaching and learning.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the leadership team. These changes include the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. Other changes include the promotion of colleagues already at the school, including a leader for the early years and a leader for English. As a result, leadership of different curriculum areas is now shared more widely across the staff than previously. New staff joined the school in September 2017.

## **Main findings**

Leaders and governors have responded positively to the outcomes of the previous inspection. The findings of the previous inspection, and external reviews that leaders have subsequently commissioned, inform the development of clear plans and appropriate actions. The school's action plan details key milestones and targets that need to be reached during the year. Plans are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect developments within the school. Outcomes are reported to the governing body, which is able to monitor how well the school is doing towards meeting stated goals.

New leaders have benefited from opportunities to work alongside more experienced colleagues. They develop their leadership skills and gain a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. External training and networking help new leaders, particularly in mathematics and English, to develop action plans that contain clear outcomes. These plans exemplify leaders' targets to improve pupils' outcomes. Regular review and evaluation of the impact of their work inform revisions to plans. Subject leaders successfully communicate their priorities and expectations to other staff through regular meetings and development sessions. They are able to monitor staff performance through a schedule of lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work. Leaders' monitoring and opportunities for staff to share their practice have resulted in greater consistency when teachers feed back to pupils. Senior leaders validate new leaders' judgements and use them to inform the school's action plans and self-evaluation. As a result, senior leaders are well informed about the school and can accurately prioritise their actions.

Leaders have successfully increased pupils' progress and raised standards across the school. Weekly meetings to review how well pupils are doing have sharpened class teachers' focus on strategies for pupils who require additional support. Leaders' analysis each half term is used to direct discussions with class teachers to help pupils make progress. Staff identify where outcomes are not as expected, and can change the additional support pupils receive as appropriate. For example, leaders regularly discuss how teachers plan to offer opportunities for the most able pupils to be challenged and achieve higher standards across the curriculum. In lessons, there are now clear opportunities for pupils with high prior attainment to tackle work which challenges them. Leaders continue to make this a priority because the impact of these actions is not yet fully demonstrable in pupils'

outcomes, particularly at the end of key stage 2.

Leaders can clearly identify where actions have a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. For example, although national outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 are not yet finalised, leaders' analysis shows a sharp improvement in pupils' overall progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 2016. Attainment by the end of key stage 2 is also much improved, although likely to remain below the national average. Attainment by the end of key stage 1 is consistently similar to the national average. Improvements in the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics mean that the school's outcomes are consistently above the national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception Year also continues to improve, despite many children having relatively low starting points at the beginning of Nursery.

At the last inspection, leaders were directed to ensure that the best teaching practice at the school was shared more widely. Teachers use recordings of their lessons to analyse their lessons in order to identify strengths and areas for development. Also, teachers provide peer-to-peer review of each other's practice. As a result, teachers have well-developed and accurate skills of self-evaluation. They focus on specific aspects of teaching and share their ideas to great effect. Senior leaders use their analysis of teaching to inform teacher development sessions and which specific areas to focus on when observing lessons.

The last inspection report directed the school to provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length and apply spelling, grammar and punctuation in a wider range of subjects. Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully improved pupils' writing skills in English lessons. Leaders now have plans in place to develop opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum. These plans have not yet had time to have a demonstrable impact on pupils' work.

Staff continue to work hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. High rates of attendance are celebrated and rewards for pupils who attend school regularly are motivational. These strategies are successful, because the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school reduced considerably during the last school year.

Leaders provide many different ways for parents and carers to become involved in the school. For example, family learning days encourage parents and carers to participate in learning activities with their children. Leaders also survey parents' and carers' views on the school to evaluate how they perceive the school. There are many formal and informal opportunities for parents and carers to raise any concerns they have with leaders.

## **External support**

Leaders benefit from the external support provided by the local authority, including opportunities to develop new ideas and approaches from visits to other schools. Officers from the local authority regularly monitor and evaluate the actions leaders take in response to the previous inspection. The local authority has an accurate view of how well the school is doing. The local authority's reviews ensure that actions taken have a positive impact on the school's overall effectiveness. They make sharp and appropriate suggestions to leaders regarding next steps of development. Leaders are responsive to, and value, the external support they receive. An outward-facing leadership culture exists at the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stoke-on-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**