

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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30 January 2020

Ms Katherine Turner  
Chipping Sodbury School  
Bowling Road  
Chipping Sodbury  
Bristol  
South Gloucestershire  
BS37 6EW

Dear Ms Turner

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chipping Sodbury School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 January 2020, 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 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority (LA) to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and made a telephone call to the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Athelston multi-academy trust (MAT).

I visited lessons, had discussions with pupils, teachers and curriculum leaders and scrutinised your self-evaluation document and LA and governance reviews.

## **Context**

Governors have made the interim headteacher a substantive appointment. You have appointed a new assistant headteacher for the oversight of the quality of teaching and learning; an interim assistant headteacher to oversee pupils' welfare and personal development; a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and an associate assistant headteacher to manage attendance and behaviour. The LA has commissioned the Athelston MAT to support the school.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection in June 2018, there has been a governance review. As a result, the governing body has a more focused understanding of its role. Governors have shown strong financial oversight and reduced a significant deficit budget while maintaining improved standards in the school. The chair leads the governing body well. He has an acute understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He meets regularly with you and challenges leadership decisions appropriately.

You have ensured that standards continue to improve. In key stage 4, pupils are doing better in mathematics, science, English baccalaureate subjects and subjects within the wider curriculum. Curriculum leaders set and review teachers' targets in the appraisal processes now. This adds a greater level of accountability which has improved standards. In most cases, this new level of line management has ensured that teams are working more effectively.

The new SENCo has arranged for pupils to be within classes with their fellow pupils. Teachers receive training on how to adapt the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, pupils with SEND are learning more effectively, as well as being part of the school community.

The leader who oversees the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding has evaluated plans stringently and has precise actions for the future based on his research. He is aware that too many disadvantaged pupils, especially in key stage 4, are not learning as well as their peers because of weak literacy skills. Too many older pupils continue to make basic errors in their writing. Pupils who come to secondary school with literacy and mathematical skills that are below the national average are catching up with their peers, especially in mathematics. There has been careful evaluation before deciding on current actions, such as the impact of the reading schemes used.

The associate assistant headteacher has made important inroads into improving attendance. He has shifted parental thinking so that they understand the benefits of education in a better way. As a result, most parents support the school's efforts to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Also, fewer parents take holidays in term time. Attendance overall, and for significant groups such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, is in line with national averages.

You are acutely aware that the school curriculum narrowed too quickly as pupils started key stage 4 examinations in Year 9. You appointed an external adviser to undertake a review of the curriculum and this makes explicit the weaknesses of the current system. There has been a significant overhaul of the curriculum as a result. Curriculum leaders have been working on learning plans to be implemented in September 2020. You are working on staffing arrangements so that changes can be operational and funded, ready for the new academic year.

Currently, the English curriculum is the weakest area in the school. The MAT, commissioned by the LA, is supporting the curriculum leader in improving the curriculum offer and holding teachers to account. For some English teachers, expectations of pupils' work are high but there are still too many who accept work that is scruffy, incomplete and contain a number of errors.

### **External support**

You, with other leaders and governors, have sought external validation of your work regularly. LA teams, national leaders of governance and external consultants have undertaken these reviews. You respond quickly and effectively to points raised so that standards have risen. The Athelston MAT has supported governors and the English department.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for South Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**