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12 November 2024

Louise Scrivens
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Scrivens

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Marden Vale CofE Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 17 October 2024, 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 meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, 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, the deputy headteacher, the chief executive officer (CEO), other senior leaders of the Diocese of Salisbury academy trust, and the chair of the academy standards and ethos committee, 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 held meetings with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, met with pupils and scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

The school should take further action to:

- Continue to develop the use of assessment in the wider curriculum to carefully check what pupils know and remember.
- Ensure that all staff receive essential training promptly following their start date.
- Clearly record incidents detailing actions taken and ensure that checks on alternative provision used by pupils are timely and robust.

Main findings

This was the first monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in October 2023. At the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher was newly appointed and many other staff had only recently taken up their subject leadership positions. They are now more established in their roles. A special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCo) is now in post. Over the last year, staffing has stabilised. This has improved the confidence of staff and enabled the school to build traction towards their identified priorities.

The school has improved its delivery of early reading through the phonics curriculum. Staff have all received expert training. They use this well to provide high quality instruction when introducing new sounds to pupils or when revisiting previous learning. Staff carefully check pupils' understanding and address any confusion or errors promptly. If pupils struggle with their reading, the school put 'keep up' support in place to help them catch up quickly. As a result, the published outcomes for the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved.

Across the wider curriculum, the school has reviewed the quality of the content for different subject areas and made changes where necessary. Subject leaders now have an improved understanding of exactly what pupils will learn from the early years foundation stage through to Year 6. They ensure that the content meets the ambition of the national curriculum. Classroom teachers receive training to support their subject knowledge. Subject leaders review the quality of the delivery of the curriculum more frequently. There is more work to do to embed this further. Additionally, planned assessments in the foundation subjects are in the early stages of development.

Following the previous inspection, the trust recognised that improvements needed to be made across many areas of the school. Action plans were quickly established with clear, measurable targets. Trust leaders review the progress towards these goals regularly. Staff benefit from working collaboratively with other schools in the trust. Some Marden Vale staff now lead on curriculum working parties for the wider trust, recognising the expertise they can bring.

During the monitoring visit, scrutiny of some systems and processes showed that improvements could be made. For example, when an incident or concern about a pupil occurs, the school take swift and effective action. However, on occasion, the details of the actions taken are not recorded in sufficient detail. Similarly, the school should strengthen procedures for checking alternative provision and the completion of staff training.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO or equivalent of the Diocese of Salisbury academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Kelly Olive
His Majesty's Inspector