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Ms Tabitha Smith
Headteacher
Offmore Primary School
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Dear Ms Smith

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Offmore Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 October 2019, 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 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.

The school should take further action to:

- raise standards and improve progress in writing in key stage 2
- ensure that more pupils achieve a high standard in English grammar, punctuation and spelling by the end of key stage 2
- ensure that monitoring and evaluation of additional funding is more systematic.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6, five members of the governing body. A telephone call was held with the school's improvement partner to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

I also conducted visits to lessons with you and your deputy headteacher and checked arrangements for safeguarding.

Context

Since the last inspection you have been appointed as the substantive headteacher following a long period as acting headteacher. The previous headteacher had been absent during and following the last inspection in September 2018 and left at Easter 2019. The chair of the governing body stepped down in July 2019 and a replacement is yet to be appointed. Several new members of the governing body were appointed from September 2019.

Main findings

Under your leadership the school has made significant improvements since it was last inspected a year ago.

Leaders plans are suitable to address the address where the school needs to improve.

Governors are acutely aware of their responsibility to challenge leaders. They are doing so now with more rigour through regular monitoring visits. There is secure financial expertise on the governing body. Membership has been enhanced by the appointment of additional governors who are knowledgeable in education and safeguarding. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths as well as where outcomes are not yet good enough. They understand of how additional funding, including the pupil premium, is spent but have not yet evaluated the impact of additional funding on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in 2019. Leaders recognise the need for a systematic approach to tracking funding streams in order to bring monitoring and evaluation of SEND in line with their approach for the evaluation of other funding streams.

Leaders have ensured greater consistency in the quality of teaching. They have set out their expectations in a clear short policy document which is applied by teachers in lessons. Pupils also understand what these expectations are. During the last academic year leaders placed a particular emphasis on the quality of teaching in mathematics. Pupils spoken to said that mathematics is now their favourite subject. Where the quality of teaching is not yet as high as leaders expect, support plans have been put in place to secure rapid improvements. Leaders have established a supportive ethos and a 'can-do' culture which inspires staff to do as well as they can.

A programme of training for teachers and additional adults has been delivered to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND receive high-quality provision and effective support in lessons. Training has also focused on ensuring

that teachers assess accurately how well pupils are doing. Monitoring of teaching by leaders takes place through regular pupil progress meetings established shortly after the last inspection.

Pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum. Plans for almost every foundation subject, including art, computing, French, history, geography, music, physical education and religious education (RE), detail pupils' expected progress from Nursery to Year 6. There are examples of pupils' work on display throughout the school to demonstrate this. Plans show the purpose of learning and why pupils are studying the work they are currently doing. Pupils' work is of a high quality and well presented. Pupils were enthusiastic about the wider range of subjects on offer. In science, for example, they liked taking part in experiments. They could remember the meaning of key words from their last experiment including 'translucent'. Pupils acquire the specialist vocabulary they need to understand their work because there is an emphasis on 'anchor words' such as 'hibernation' in Year 2 science. By the time pupils leave Year 6 they are able to write paragraphs in French. This is because of the way French is implemented throughout the school, starting with the introduction of short words and phrases in Reception. Pupils could recall their recent learning in RE on the Blue Mosque in Turkey because of the way they had been taught to remember key information.

The school has introduced a programme to ensure that phonics is now taught systematically through sticking closely to one scheme. As a result, phonics standards by Year 1 are now close to the national average. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to support those who find reading difficult and need to catch up. Pupils start phonics right away at the start of the year in Nursery and Reception. Leaders have introduced a systematic approach to guided reading for older pupils. Pupils spoken to said that they really enjoy this. Leaders are now monitoring pupils' reading closely.

Pupils' attainment significantly improved at key stage 2 in 2019. According to provisional results, the proportion reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined soared and was in line with the national average. Standards in mathematics were especially high. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in writing was high. The progress that pupils made in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 also improved compared to the previous year and is now above average.

Writing is the school's key priority for this year. Leaders have changed the way English grammar, punctuation and spelling was only taught in Years 5 and 6. It is now introduced much earlier in the school. It will take some time for the results to reflect this change, however. Handwriting is a key focus for the school and has led to significant improvement in the quality of pupils' work. Pupils in Reception are given numerous opportunities to develop their writing, including the chance to write short stories. Their writing is tracked closely to show how much more they have learned and remembered. Older pupils spoken to said that teachers have the same

expectations in grammar, punctuation and spelling in other subjects, including mathematics, as they do in English. Work seen in their books confirmed this. Pupils benefit from writing letters with a real purpose, for example using notepaper and envelopes. Older pupils enjoy the 'punctuation pyramid', which reminds them which tier they should be working at to improve their writing.

External support

Leaders have been keen to engage with external partners. Leaders are highly receptive to appointed external support and challenge, whether from the local authority or local schools, for example in developing their curriculum and reviewing safeguarding.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector