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20 January 2020

Jo Herrero
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Dear Mrs Herrero

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 December 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 two 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.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves
- in subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' knowledge builds in a logical sequence
- improvement plans identify more precise milestones and success criteria to support governors in evaluating the impact of leaders' actions.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. I also reviewed a range of other documents including the school's self-evaluation, curriculum plans, records of monitoring activities, minutes of governing body meetings and the single central record. Together with leaders, I evaluated pupils' work in English, mathematics, topic and science. I spoke to a range of pupils about their work in these subjects. I made short visits to mathematics lessons in Years 5 and 6.

Context

Since the previous inspection in September 2017, six new teachers have joined the school. There is a new chair of the governing body. In September 2019, the school changed its name from 'The Willows Church of England Primary School' to 'Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School'.

Main findings

The school has come a long way since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have established a culture of high expectation. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders regularly review and update improvement plans to reflect developments within the school. The actions they take focus on the right things. As a result, the quality of education is improving. Pupils' achievement is rising, particularly in English and mathematics. In 2019, pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 was in the highest 20% of all schools. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was at least in line with national averages.

Leaders have introduced a new mathematics curriculum. Plans outline what teachers need to teach in each year group. These plans break down what pupils need to learn into small steps. As a result, pupils' knowledge builds in a logical order. Teachers recap on what pupils already know before moving on to teaching something new. This helps pupils to remember important facts and ideas.

Teachers have received training to improve the planning and teaching of mathematics. Their subject knowledge is growing. Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in different ways. They challenge pupils to explain their thinking. Classroom displays prompt pupils to respond to questions such as 'Why do you think that?' and 'Is there another way?' Pupils' books show that they are learning to apply their knowledge of number more confidently to solve problems. Teachers provide practical resources such as counters and Dienes apparatus to help pupils learn new skills.

Leaders have ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of writing within key stages 1 and 2. In key stage 1, teachers give high priority to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills before moving on to reading and writing. This is helping pupils to be clear about what they want to write and how they are going to write it. Teachers build on this in key stage 2. Within each unit of work, pupils begin by planning what they want to write. They learn the skills they need to write well. Pupils finish by applying what they have learned in an extended piece of writing. Pupils' confidence with writing is growing as a result. Pupils write with imagination and flair. They are animated when talking about the stories they have written.

Teachers now plan opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects such as history. For example, Year 3 pupils have recently written a newspaper article to report on the discovery of the prehistoric village, Skara Brae. However, sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' writing in different subjects, particularly for the most able pupils.

Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' grammar are working. Pupils use an appropriate range of techniques to make their writing correct and interesting to read. Year 2 pupils can explain how to use adjectives in their writing to make it more interesting to the reader. Year 4 pupils can talk about how to use fronted adverbials to describe the action in a sentence. Teachers revisit important skills so that pupils practise and refine these. For example, in Year 1, pupils go back to the use of capital letters and full stops.

In English and mathematics, teachers are using assessment information more effectively to plan work that matches pupils' needs. They check pupils' understanding in lessons, for example by asking questions. Teachers adapt their teaching accordingly. Pupils say they receive help with their learning if they need it.

In the wider curriculum, subject leaders are beginning to take responsibility for their subjects. Leaders have received training to develop their leadership skills. They have begun to develop curriculum plans in each subject. These plans identify the topics teachers should cover. In some subjects, for example science, leaders have planned the specific knowledge and skills pupils should learn in each topic. However, this is not fully in place in all subjects. For example, in history, leaders do not provide teachers with enough guidance about the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order in which to teach this.

Subject leaders now monitor the quality of education more effectively. As a result, they know what is working well and what needs to improve. They work with teachers to improve their practice. For example, in English and mathematics, leaders help teachers to plan. They develop teachers' skills by modelling how to deliver different aspects of the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum in these subjects is improving rapidly. In other subjects, leaders visit lessons and look at pupils' work. They ensure that teachers are covering the agreed topics.

Leaders know that they need to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. They have put systems in place to alert parents if their child's attendance is too low. Leaders check that pupils who are frequently absent from school are safe. They reward pupils who attend well through termly award assemblies. These actions have ensured that the overall attendance of pupils is in line with the national average. However, this figure masks the continued poor attendance of disadvantaged pupils. In 2019, disadvantaged pupils' attendance was 6% lower than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders do not have high enough expectations for these pupils' attendance. Their actions do not address the specific barriers that disadvantaged pupils and their families might be facing.

Governors have a secure grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders provide detailed reports to governors. This ensures that governors know the actions that leaders are taking to improve the school. However, improvement plans do not contain precise enough milestones and success criteria to support governors in evaluating the impact of these actions.

External support

The local authority has provided an effective package of support for the school. They make regular checks on leaders' actions and the progress the school is making. The school improvement adviser provides leaders with helpful feedback, particularly about what is going well. This supports leaders in evaluating the school's effectiveness and redirecting their actions as necessary. The school improvement adviser has worked with senior leaders and subject leaders to develop their skills. As a result, the quality of monitoring has improved. The local authority has also delivered training for governors. Leaders and governors are responsive to the external support they receive. They are outward facing and are keen to learn from best practice elsewhere.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector