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Sarah Williams
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Dear Mrs Williams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oakfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 February 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, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The action plan was evaluated.

I observed children's learning in the early years and heard several pupils read. I evaluated the school's wider curriculum planning documents. The school's self-evaluation and improvement documents were evaluated, along with a range of other documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing body and the local authority's report following their recent review of teaching and learning.

Main findings

Leaders have improved the teaching of early reading and phonics so that it is now more consistent. The subject leader has trained all staff in how to teach phonics and guided reading well. Leaders have reorganised all reading books to make sure that they are properly matched to the phonics programme. Pupils enjoy reading much more now that their confidence and fluency are increasing. The improved curriculum for the teaching of reading was reflected in higher results in the Year 1 phonics screening check and Year 2 statutory reading test in 2019.

Leaders have substantially increased pupils' opportunities to read to adults in school. Pupils read much more often. Leaders have successfully engaged parents in hearing pupils read regularly at home. Other adults visit school to hear pupils read through the local authority 'reading champion' scheme. This is helping pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, to get the extra practice that they need.

The headteacher is developing the skills of senior and middle leaders, who were relatively new to their roles at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has established distinctive roles for each member of the team and they are very clear on their responsibilities. Senior and middle leaders are studying for nationally accredited leadership qualifications. They are learning from leaders in other successful schools and have greater awareness of research evidence in the subjects that they lead. They have already tried new ideas in certain year groups to check that they work before introducing them across the school. This vibrant leadership team is united in their pursuit for rapid improvement and their hard work is paying off.

Teachers attend writing moderation sessions with other schools within the area. Several members of the leadership team are accredited writing moderators for the local authority, so they are confident that their assessment of pupils' writing is accurate. Leaders have raised expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. Teachers assess pupils' writing 'in the moment' so that mistakes are corrected quickly. Pupils enjoy improving their writing straight away. Pupils now take more pride in their work. Their vocabulary is increasing because teachers read high-quality literature to each class every day.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is studying for the national qualification linked to this role. Her knowledge and leadership skills have increased through all the training and experience she has gained since the last inspection. The plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) now include achievable targets. Leaders' identification and assessment of need are accurate, so teachers know which small step to set next for each pupil. Pupils have tutorials on a fortnightly basis to discuss their targets with teaching assistants. This means that targets can be adjusted quickly if necessary. Pupils with SEND know that

their views about their learning and progress are valued. They are thriving with this responsibility.

Leaders have transformed the outdoor classroom in the early years. The Department for Education provided additional funding and leaders have purchased new equipment and resources. There are lots of opportunities for children to practise their early reading, writing and mathematical skills when they are playing. This is helping to embed their learning. The records of children's learning include a wealth of evidence of children's progress.

Although children still get lots of time to play, leaders have increased the amount of formal teaching happening in the early years. All staff know what children should achieve in phonics, at each milestone, and they are making sure that every child keeps up. This is reflected in the higher proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development in 2019. This was above the national average. Children are settled, happy and learning well.

Leaders gave teachers extra time to work together to develop wider curriculum plans in each subject. Leaders have ensured that these plans are ambitious for each year group. They have checked the sequence of learning to identify the most important content that teachers must revisit. Leaders check to make sure that pupils remember what they have learned.

Middle leaders have improved their action-planning skills. They have streamlined what they write so that the plans are focused on realistic targets in reasonable timescales. Leaders have thought carefully about the success criteria that will prove their plans are working. Each subject leader writes curriculum update reports for governors. Governors challenge leaders at all levels. They hold leaders to account for the difference they are making to pupils' learning and progress.

The governors' action plan was written jointly with the local authority. Governors have included priorities from the areas identified as requiring improvement in the last inspection. The action plan includes specific targets against which governors can hold leaders to account. Governors should add figures to show parents and teachers how much funding they have allocated to deliver the plan.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support. The school improvement partner guided leaders to improve the early years, including suggesting other settings for leaders to visit. Local authority officers have developed middle leaders' skills. They have coached leaders in how to write succinct action plans and helped leaders evaluate the impact of their work. The local authority recognises that the headteacher takes advice, but final decisions about school improvement are made within the senior leadership team. Leaders are not over-reliant on external support.

The headteacher approached the Department for Education seeking additional support. They recommended national leaders of education and the headteacher has begun working with one of them. The headteacher of the local secondary school works closely with the headteacher as a peer professional. He recognises that the healthy, professional challenge between them works both ways and is improving leadership in both schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Ralph
Her Majesty's Inspector