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Keily Stretton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Stretton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ravenhurst Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 May 2021, 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(2) 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

Context

A new headteacher was appointed in January 2020. Four new teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. Three new governors have been appointed and all vacancies on the governing body have now been filled.

Leaders have swiftly identified what needs to improve and have written a clear and effective plan to do this. Their evaluation of the school is accurate, and they know what work still needs to be done. Some of these changes have not taken place as quickly as leaders initially planned. Leaders and governors have been mindful of the additional work that staff have undertaken to provide education throughout the pandemic.

Since the wider reopening of the school in March 2021, attendance has returned to normal. While a few pupils were anxious about returning to school, leaders have made sure that pupils get the help that they need to start the day with confidence. Most staff have returned to work. There has been a renewed focus on school improvement.

Now that all pupils have returned, teachers have checked what pupils can remember in subjects such as English. Not all pupils have remembered what they had previously learned.

Main findings

Leaders wasted no time in establishing a new approach to teaching and learning. They have called this 'The Ravenhurst Way'. They prioritised improving the quality of education in English and mathematics. Leaders have checked that this has made a difference to how pupils learn. Pupils say that they have more opportunities to practise their learning. When they find new knowledge hard to remember, their teachers find different ways for them to learn it in the classroom. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities told me that they think that they get the help that they need.

A love of reading is at the heart of the curriculum that leaders have planned. They have acted quickly to bring this about. They have made sure that pupils have plenty of time to read during the school day and that pupils who need to practise their reading can do this frequently. Pupils can explain what they remember about the stories that they read together and know what it means to get better at reading. They enjoy using the refurbished school libraries.

Leaders want pupils to get off to a quick start in reading. They changed the phonics curriculum and organised some training for all staff to help them to teach phonics well. Leaders acted swiftly to make sure that the books that pupils read contain the sounds that they know. However, the phonics curriculum is not yet precise enough about what sounds pupils need to learn and when.

When all pupils returned to school, leaders made further changes to the way that phonics is taught. Teachers spotted that some pupils had forgotten some of the sounds that they knew before. Leaders acted with urgency to address this. There

are now additional phonics lessons so that pupils have more chances to catch up and practise sounds until they remember them. Leaders have checked to see the impact of these changes. Their evaluation is accurate and shows that the teaching of phonics is not yet consistent. Leaders rapidly organised more training to secure staff subject knowledge.

Leaders have begun work to improve the wider curriculum. However, as priorities changed during the year due to COVID-19, work on improving the wider curriculum slowed. Some leaders have not yet had the training that they need to develop a deep understanding of subject knowledge. This hinders them from developing a clear sequence of learning and giving teachers the help that they need. The knowledge that pupils should gain is not yet clearly identified in the wider curriculum. While pupils gain some knowledge, it does not consistently build on what they learned the year before.

Governors understand their role in checking that the changes are making a difference. They ask insightful questions to help them evaluate the progress that the school has made. They challenge leaders to make sure that the momentum of improvement is maintained. Governors now have a clear plan to further develop their monitoring, particularly of the wider curriculum.

Staff want pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school values have been established and pupils speak with enthusiasm about the new school behaviour policy. They find it clear and easy to understand. They can remember what they have learned about staying safe online. Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development and have made sure that all pupils learn about different faiths and different types of families. Pupils told me how much they value learning about what was important to each other.

Additional support

The local authority has brokered a broad range of effective support for leaders. This has helped leaders to check whether the changes that they have made are making a difference for pupils. Recognising that more still needs to be done, the local authority have organised further support for senior and subject leaders.

The school works closely with Affinity teaching schools alliance. They have supported teachers who are new to leadership and have provided training for staff. They have worked with leaders to check that this is improving teaching in the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I considered the school's development plan, self-evaluation summary and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I met with a group of subject leaders and looked at some of their plans. I visited lessons, listened to pupils read and met with groups of pupils. I also considered some of their work. I met with a representative of the local authority and scrutinised records of visits by external partners who are supporting the school. I considered the responses on the staff survey and Ofsted Parent View.

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

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson
Her Majesty's Inspector