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Owen Rhodes
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rhodes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weeting Church of England 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 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you 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.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects set out clearly what teachers will teach and when, so that pupils successfully build on their knowledge, skills and understanding over time

- build on the recent improvements in the effectiveness of the local governing body (LGB), so that governors check that the curriculum is planned and taught as leaders intend.

Context

Since the previous inspection in May 2019, you joined the school as executive headteacher in September 2019. Shortly after, the executive deputy headteacher and the executive assistant headteacher took up their roles. The three of you provide the senior leadership for Trinity Partnership. Trinity Partnership consists of this school and two others. The chair of the LGB joined in September 2019 and took on the role of chair in December 2019. Two more governors have recently joined the LGB. In your small school, two of the four teachers have joined since the previous inspection.

Main findings

Since your appointment, you and your senior leaders have acted swiftly to address the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection. Improvement is evident in all the areas reported as requiring attention at that time.

Senior leaders' actions have focused on improving the quality of education provided for pupils. Senior leaders have redesigned the curriculum to support every pupil to achieve well and be ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils told me that they enjoy learning about 'lots of different things'. You and your leaders have chosen to plan and teach most subjects linked to high-quality texts. Books have been selected to widen pupils' vocabulary and knowledge and to develop a love of reading.

Leadership in the school has been strengthened. Training has enabled subject leaders to carry out their roles and responsibilities more effectively. They have developed plans for all subjects that identify the content to be taught for every year group. Teachers are using these plans to teach their lessons. In some subjects, including English, mathematics, science and music, plans are consistent and clear. They set out, in order, what teachers will teach and when, so that pupils remember important knowledge and make links with what they already know. However, in other subjects, such as history, geography and computing, teaching plans do not support teachers to deliver the intended curriculum coherently. This results in inconsistent teaching across some subjects and year groups. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

You and your senior leaders are establishing a well-organised curriculum for teaching reading, including phonics, throughout the school. In September 2020, you and your leaders introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Teachers have benefited from training and guidance to ensure that phonics is taught consistently

to younger pupils. Teachers of older pupils are currently receiving this training. During our visits to lessons, younger pupils used their phonics knowledge well and older pupils understood the texts they were reading with increasing knowledge and skill.

During this academic year, some subject leaders have not been able to check on the teaching of their subject as closely as they would like. This was particularly challenging when the school was closed to most pupils due to COVID-19. Subject leaders' monitoring resumed fully when pupils returned to school in March 2021. Additionally, teachers' assessments have identified that around a quarter of pupils need to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics. To address this, teachers are providing extra lessons in phonics, writing and mathematics. You expect most pupils to have caught up by the end of the summer term.

You have improved the way the school informs and consults with parents and carers. You regularly send out newsletters that explain what is being taught and how parents can support their children's learning at home. The school's website gives a full picture of all aspects of the school's work. You have held parent forum meetings to find out parents' views about the school and to listen to their suggestions. Parents are more positive about the school's work and the education their children receive. Since the previous inspection, parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, have improved significantly.

The work of the LGB is improving. The chair is experienced and knowledgeable. She is providing clear guidance and the trust is providing specific training so that all governors can understand and carry out their responsibilities effectively. Governors are developing an understanding of the curriculum and how pupils learn important knowledge and skills across subjects. This is at an early stage. Currently, governors are not holding senior leaders and subject leaders to account for the curriculum that is planned and taught to pupils.

You and your leaders are clear about what needs to be done to improve the quality of education. The school's development plan focuses appropriately on the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection and the school's own priorities. The trust regularly checks with you to ensure that the necessary actions are taking place and making a positive difference.

Additional support

Since the previous inspection, the trust has provided, or brokered, support for the school. For example, it has provided training for subject leaders to increase their subject-specific knowledge and develop the skills required to lead their subjects effectively. The trust has provided training for staff to teach the school's phonics programme and purchased resources to deliver the reading curriculum. Additionally, you and your staff have opportunities to work with other schools in the trust to develop and share effective practice.

Trust leaders check that actions to improve the school take place quickly so that you and your staff can meet the high expectations held for all pupils. You and your staff have worked effectively with another school. Staff in both schools shared subject plans and resources to develop the school's curriculum.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the executive deputy headteacher, the executive assistant headteacher, subject leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and the secretary assistant. I also met with the chair of the LGB, the chief executive officer (CEO) and representatives from the trust. Together we visited lessons in all classes. I looked at pupils' work and observed a phonics session. I talked with a group of pupils about their learning and their views of the school.

I scrutinised the school's website, curriculum plans, teaching resources, safeguarding checks for adults who work in the school, the school's own evaluation, the development plan and the minutes of LGB meetings. I considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including nine free-text responses, and reviewed the six responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the Diocese of Ely multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector