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Martin O'Mahony
Acting Executive Headteacher
Clyst Hydon Primary School
Clyst Hydon
Cullompton
Devon
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Dear Mr O'Mahony

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Clyst Hydon Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 began. 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.

Context

In September 2019, the school joined Devon Moors Federation. You were appointed as acting executive headteacher. The lead teacher, who deputises for you, was appointed in July 2020.

Main findings

Since the previous section 5 inspection in July 2019, you and your staff have successfully tackled many of the areas identified as needing improvement. You and other leaders are continuing to work on the right things to improve the quality of education. You are making changes to the curriculum to help pupils know more and remember more. Staff are determined that the quality of education continues to improve.

Leaders' plans set out how they intend to improve the curriculum further. However, these plans lack precision. This also means that governors are not able to check the impact of these plans effectively. As a result, governors are not able to assure themselves of any improvements to the quality of education.

You have established an effective early reading curriculum. The moment children start school they develop the fundamental knowledge and skills they need to learn how to read. Regular checks by teachers and effective additional support ensure that pupils who fall behind with their reading catch up quickly. Additional support is particularly strong for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. More recently, your English leader has been developing the wider reading curriculum. This is because, once pupils have secured the essential early reading skills, the curriculum that follows is not as well planned. However, it is too early to see any tangible impact of this work.

At the most recent section 5 inspection, the inspector identified that pupils' spelling needed to improve. The writing curriculum is now better planned. Over time, pupils develop their knowledge well. Pupils are able to draw on this to write for a range of audiences and purposes. In addition, teachers are tenacious in improving pupils' understanding of vocabulary. This is helping pupils to gain a better understanding of key ideas. In turn, this is having a positive impact on pupils' spelling.

In early 2020, you began to redesign the broader curriculum. However, your development slowed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, some subjects are not where you would like them to be. Some curriculum plans are not well organised. In addition, you and your staff are currently developing methods to check what pupils have remembered. You are trialling a new approach across a range of subjects. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

Subject leaders show a strong commitment to improve the subjects for which they are responsible. However, they do not always know if the curriculum is taught as they intend. This is because they are not routinely checking if teaching is supporting pupils to learn the content well.

Additional support

You have a strong relationship with the local authority. You appreciate the balance of support and challenge it has provided. Regular checks by local authority officers have helped you to focus on the right things. You have used training provided by the local authority to address weaknesses in the quality of education. You and your staff value this support.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders. I held remote meetings with the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection.

I looked at pupils' work and reviewed documentation related to curriculum plans. I listened to pupils from Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to an adult. I also visited reading lessons.

I considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the survey for staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Middlemore
Her Majesty's Inspector