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14 June 2021

Rachel Jacob
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Dear Mrs Jacob

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pinkwell Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 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.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that subject leaders are clear about what they want children to know by the end of the early years and how this corresponds with the wider curriculum in Years 1 to 6

- develop systems to check what pupils know and remember in each subject, and ensure that, as they continue to develop the curriculum, checks are purposeful and used to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Context

Since the previous inspection, staffing has remained largely stable, although there have been some changes to the teaching and support staff teams. The senior leadership team has remained constant since April 2019. Due to staff changes and difficulties related to COVID-19, Spanish is not being taught this term. Leaders plan to reintroduce this subject next term.

The school is coming to the end of a restructure of the support and administrative staff teams.

Main findings

You and the leadership team wasted no time in finding out the reasons behind the weaknesses identified at the section 5 inspection in March 2019. You have established a united team of senior leaders who share your high expectations and determination to give pupils and their families the very best. Leaders at all levels understand the part they play in improving the school.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that still need to be addressed. Leaders and the trust have invested significantly in a training programme for staff. Leaders check carefully that staff training makes a difference to pupils' learning.

In addition to managing the many challenges that COVID-19 has brought to the school, leaders worked effectively to implement their detailed plans for improvement. You and your team have focused on the right things at the right times. Leaders' close working and their 'no excuses' approach have helped them to overcome any obstacles.

Leaders know that getting the curriculum right is at the heart of improving the quality of education. Leaders knew that what pupils were learning previously was not good enough. The new curriculum, which officially commenced in September 2019, is well thought out. It is still developing. But it is already making a difference. For example, pupils in Year 5 were excited to talk about their learning 'themes'. They remembered key knowledge from each theme and made links between and within subjects.

Teachers and support staff have improved the way they address pupils' misconceptions in lessons and adapt approaches to meet the needs of individual

pupils. Nevertheless, leaders now need to check what pupils know and remember in each subject.

The phonics programme is well established and delivered consistently. Staff are well trained to teach pupils how to read using phonics. Leaders ensure that pupils who need help to catch up, including pupils in Years 3 to 6, are given the right levels of support. Aside from phonics, the rest of the reading curriculum is new. It is showing positive early signs. But it needs time to embed, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

Leaders have improved the way in which mathematics is planned and delivered. The new approaches are already making a difference, especially to pupils in Years 1 and 2. Over the past year, due to the partial school closures and periods of remote education, leaders have had to make changes to what is taught in mathematics. You and your team have identified the gaps in pupils' knowledge. You have focused on the most essential things that pupils need in order to move forward in their learning. This has meant that some things have not been covered in as much detail. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that pupils learn the full range of mathematics concepts from the start of next term.

Leaders are working effectively to address the weaknesses in the early years. Leaders' current focus on developing children's language and vocabulary is making a difference. Staff support children's early reading and mathematics more effectively now. Leaders know how children's learning in the early years prepares them for reading and mathematics in Year 1. But this is not the case in the other areas of learning. Subject leaders have not considered what children learn in the early years in relation to their subjects. Leaders need to be clear about what they want children to learn by the end of Reception and how this is built on in each subject from Year 1 onwards.

Leaders work extensively with specific families in order to improve the attendance of pupils who are absent too often. You know that this is something leaders need to continue to work on. But things are moving in the right direction. Attendance is improving and persistent absence is reducing.

Leaders have also prioritised pupils' well-being and personal development. A higher-than-average number of pupils arrive and leave the school throughout the year. Despite the challenges this sometimes brings, you and the leadership team embrace this as a strength of their school. The school's pastoral team has worked with dedication to get pupils and their families the support they need.

Additional support

The strong partnership between leaders and the multi-academy trust has contributed to the improvements since the last inspection. The trust has brokered additional support for staff training and development. Leaders at Pinkwell contribute

to trust-wide initiatives and research projects, for example in developing pupils' reading and vocabulary in Years 1 and 2. The 'team around the academy', in its governance role, is effective. This team holds you and senior leaders to account for the work you do.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, year group leaders and members of the safeguarding and attendance teams. From the multi-academy trust, I met the chief executive officer, the director of governance and policy, and the regional director to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons, toured the school and met with staff and pupils. I checked the school's single central register of staff suitability checks. I reviewed the responses to Ofsted's Parent View and staff surveys. I looked at the school's improvement plans and documentation related to curriculum and attendance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Gary Rawlings
Her Majesty's Inspector