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Dear Mrs Hine

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Margaret's CofE 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 three 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 the curriculum is planned carefully so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding in all subjects.

Context

A new deputy headteacher and a new special educational needs coordinator have been appointed since the last section 5 inspection. Five new governors have been appointed to the full governing body over the past year. Pupils' attendance has remained high since the school opened fully after its partial closure during the third national lockdown earlier this year.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders are working hard to improve the school. You are ambitious for pupils to do well. Leaders continue to improve the curriculum so that pupils know and remember more. Staff feel very well supported by leaders and staff morale is high. You have galvanised staff into a team that is passionate about improving the quality of education for its pupils.

Leaders organise the curriculum well in many subject areas, such as English and mathematics. Improvements to the curriculum have gathered pace since September 2020. In most subjects, subject leaders have made sure that plans for organising and delivering knowledge are better organised. However, the curriculum in some subjects is not yet as well developed. For example, in modern foreign languages and history, subject leaders have not yet identified what they want pupils to learn clearly enough.

All staff prioritise reading. Pupils get off to a good start with their reading as soon as they join the school. Children are introduced to phonics if they attend the school's nursery. In Reception, children quickly develop their understanding of phonics and begin to read and construct short sentences. Pupils who get behind in their reading are ably supported by well-trained teaching assistants.

In English, improved planning means that teachers implement the curriculum effectively. Pupils write with confidence. They plan their work thoughtfully to develop ideas. Pupils also enrich their vocabulary by using thesauruses and dictionaries well. Their spelling, grammar and punctuation are developing. Teachers' feedback ensures that pupils' misconceptions and mistakes are quickly rectified.

Pupils enjoy learning about mathematics from an early age. In early years, pupils develop an enthusiasm for solving problems using numbers. In other year groups, teachers explain mathematical concepts clearly and organise learning well. This supports pupils in furthering their understanding of increasingly complex ideas and principles.

Since the last section 5 inspection, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved quickly. You have made sure that leaders' carefully designed strategies are now in place. Knowledgeable staff use thoughtfully

crafted targets and strategies to ensure that they meet the needs of pupils with SEND. All staff are committed to ensuring that every pupil with SEND has the right support and is included fully in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils are happy at school. They enjoy after-school clubs such as basketball and karate. Some enjoy being part of the school council, where they feel like they make a difference to the way the school is run.

The appointment of new governors over the past year has strengthened governors' expertise. Some training had to be postponed as a result of the third national lockdown. However, a renewed training schedule is now in place and governors are committed to continue to improve their knowledge and skills.

Additional support

You have found the support offered by West Sussex local authority useful. The local authority has monitored the school's progress through meetings with leaders and governors. You feel that these meetings have helped you to sharpen plans for school improvement. Advisers from the local authority have also provided well-received training for subject leaders.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, staff, governors, the multi-academy chief executive officer and the director of education from the trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's improvement plan. Together, you and I visited lessons to observe learning. I also looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to a group of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector