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Mark Knowles
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Knowles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coppice Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 5 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

You have been in post since just before the last inspection. The deputy headteacher is new to the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in the current academic year. Five new teachers have been appointed since the last inspection.

These appointments include the English leader and mathematics leader. Approximately three quarters of pupils were educated at home when the school was partially closed in the early part of the spring term 2021. Around four fifths of all vulnerable pupils attended school on site. Half of the pupils with education, health and care plans attended on site during the same period. At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

Your work to improve the quality of education is beginning to yield results. Since the school was last inspected, the teaching team has been strengthened, including building greater expertise in special educational needs. Other senior leaders are injecting purposeful energy that is helping you drive forward with your plans for school improvement. Subject leaders are also playing their part. They regularly check the quality of curriculum planning, check information on pupils' performance and support others to improve their practice. Your overview of the school's current performance is realistic and accurate. School governors are well informed about how the school is doing and what needs to be done next.

Reading provision is stronger than it used to be and staff are more ambitious for their pupils. Your approach to reading is now firmly embedded across the curriculum. Reading is a priority. Teachers follow a consistent approach to the teaching of new reading skills which follows a set pattern throughout the week. I scrutinised a range of work linked to reading from all year groups which clearly showed how these new approaches to reading are beginning to have the desired impact.

Boosting pupils' progress in mathematics remains a key priority throughout the school. COVID-19 has had an adverse impact on their progress in this subject. However, leaders have been proactive in identifying the gaps in learning that have emerged and have started to revisit these topics. You have prioritised basic skills, including recall of multiplication facts (times tables). All pupils are expected to know their times tables by the end of Year 4. Pupils who struggle to meet this expectation benefit from additional support. This is helping them catch up and master their times tables.

Subject leaders have revised their curriculum plans to ensure that pupils' learning builds sequentially. Some are further ahead than others in making these improvements to the curriculum. Some subjects have had some aspects of their teaching or development paused as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. For example, some aspects of the computing curriculum were more difficult to teach remotely. You have worked hard to overcome these barriers. For example, teachers have blocked some time for each class in the computer suite this term, so they can cover missed learning. Teachers check pupils' understanding in a number of ways to help to identify what pupils know and can remember. This is helping teachers to plan appropriate next steps in pupils' learning.

This term, a range of wider curriculum activities have begun again. Staff have taken pupils swimming and restarted team games and sports. Extra-curricular clubs, including cheerleading, art and craft and a science club, have restarted. Every pupil in Year 5 learns to play the guitar. Leaders carefully track pupils' rates of participation and encourage good attendance. As a consequence, there have been high levels of engagement since they have resumed.

Leaders' work on promoting the school's core values is helping to improve pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils know and understand these values. A rewards system encourages pupils to put these values into action, for example by showing respect to others. However, the pupils I spoke to did not have the same depth of understanding when talking about fundamental British values such as democracy.

Leaders with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have been proactive in addressing many of the issues identified at the last full inspection. There is now a joined-up approach to setting targets and writing plans for pupils with SEND. This involves the SENCo meeting with teachers, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil. Leaders and governors acknowledge that there is still more work that can be done to improve outcomes for pupils with SEND. Leaders have produced an action plan that is focusing on the right areas to improve.

Staff enjoy working at the school and those surveyed say that it is improving. The vast majority of parents and carers speak positively about the school. One parent's comment captured the general feeling of many: 'I love the ethos of the school led by the headteacher. The teaching staff are kind, caring and compassionate.' Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their school and say that the teachers are kind and helpful. Leaders want to hear from pupils about how the school can be improved. Pupils feel that they are listened to and leaders take action to make things better. The open and proactive approach of the school is helping secure the improvements needed. Positive things are happening. The school is moving in the right direction.

Additional support

The school has received and acted on helpful advice and support from the local authority and a local teaching school. Leaders and staff have attended training and worked with advisory staff to improve aspects of their work, including subject leadership. The school has plans in place to become an academy in the autumn term 2021. Leaders anticipate that joining a multi-academy trust will see the school working more closely with its feeder infant school and another primary school within the borough.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher/SENCo, eight pupils and three governors, including the chair, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I looked at several documents that included the school's

own evaluation of its work, school improvement plans and curriculum plans from a range of subjects. I also examined the single central record of staff recruitment checks. We looked at 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 54 free-text responses, and 23 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Phillips

Her Majesty's Inspector