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Davinder Jandu
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Dear Mrs Jandu

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Yarnfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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. The inspection took place because the school was judged requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. Prior to this, the school was judged to require special measures. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in July 2018.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 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:

- Make sure that the school development plan clearly sets out what is required to sustain the pace of curriculum improvement and to enable leaders to robustly evaluate the impact of their actions.

Context

In the autumn term 2020, the attendance of pupils and staff was significantly affected by COVID-19. Many members of the school community had to self-isolate. During this and subsequent national lockdowns, staff continued to deliver the planned curriculum to pupils who were learning remotely at home.

There have been several changes in staffing and leadership since the last inspection. You took up the position of principal in November 2018. The leadership team was subsequently restructured, and three new additional assistant principal posts were created. These were filled by internal candidates. In September 2020, a new special educational needs coordinator was appointed. A new local governing body has been put in place which monitors Yarnfield Primary School only.

Main findings

You are hugely ambitious for the pupils of Yarnfield Primary School. A dynamic and determined leadership team supports you well. Leaders are addressing the areas identified at the previous inspection. They are doing the right things, at the right time, in the right order to improve the school.

Leaders, in partnership with the multi-academy trust, have placed improving the curriculum at the heart of their work. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including the most able, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have sequenced learning carefully, so pupils build on what they have learned before. For instance, when learning about the Mayans in Year 5 history, pupils draw on what they previously learned about social class when they studied the Egyptians. Teachers regularly plan 'connect days' that link previous learning to new learning. This means that pupils are getting better at using their knowledge in different contexts. Staff engage with a network of teachers from across the multi-academy trust to improve the curriculum. This works well.

Leaders are taking swift action to address subjects where the curriculum is less developed. In subjects where the curriculum is stronger, leaders continue to look to improve it further, for instance by developing pupils' problem-solving in mathematics.

Leaders' focus on the curriculum has contributed to improving pupils' behaviour. This is because pupils are interested in their learning. Routines in classrooms are well established and pupils are rightly proud of their work. Pupils respond to

teachers' high expectations. Teachers demonstrate and explain new concepts well. They provide the right level of support. This is helping pupils to become more resilient. They are polite and courteous to visitors, staff and each other. Leaders have put a range of strategies in place to celebrate and reward pupils' efforts and achievements. These contribute to a 'can do' culture.

COVID-19 restrictions have affected the pace of change in certain subjects. It has prevented leaders from embedding some improvements. However, this has not led to a loss of momentum. Leaders' plans for improvement remain on course. Leaders have responded with verve and energy, navigating carefully through challenging times. They have adjusted curriculum plans to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

In early years, clear routines are in place which provide children with a positive and calm learning environment. There are high expectations of behaviour and these contribute further to learning. Children have many opportunities to develop writing, from early mark making to simple sentences in Reception. Children listen to adults, follow instructions, and help willingly. As a result, they are well equipped to move into Year 1.

Reading provision is organised and structured. It has been a priority. The approach to reading is now embedded across the curriculum. Teachers follow a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. This follows a set weekly pattern. Staff are well trained. Teachers provide pupils with books that closely match their phonic knowledge. They regularly check what pupils know and remember. When needed, staff provide additional help to pupils with their reading.

The school fosters a love of reading, for instance running reading challenges, and providing online access to books. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books they are reading. Leaders involve parents and encourage them to read with their children at home. This is proving successful. For example, in February 2021 pupils accessed over 5000 online books.

The school improvement plan focuses on the priorities identified at the last inspection. However, it does not make clear how leaders will further improve the curriculum. For example, plans to improve modern foreign languages and computing are not specific about what needs to improve and by when. This makes it harder for leaders, including governors, to check the speed or success of the planned improvements.

The change to the structure of governance has helped forge a close partnership between leaders and governors. This has helped the school to improve. Governors and trustees have the determination and expertise to make a difference. They question leaders' decisions, providing challenge and support in equal measure. Multi-academy trust leaders are unwavering in their ambition for pupils. They have focused on developing leaders in the school to bring about change. They are clear

that changes should be sustainable and substantive. The open and upbeat approach of all members of the school community is making a difference. The school is moving in the right direction.

Additional support

Leaders have actively sought support from external partners. They are keen to bring in external expertise which can contribute to the improvement of the school. Leaders make careful decisions about which support will make the greatest difference to the quality of education. This additional support has strengthened leaders' ability to sustain improvements. Leaders use this support well, for instance in improving English and mathematics provision.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the principal, other senior leaders and teaching staff. I also met with the multi-academy trust chief executive officer and education director, and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I examined the school's single central register of background checks on adults working in the school. I reviewed the school's improvement plan and the school's own evaluation of its work. I scrutinised curriculum plans alongside pupils' workbooks, visited several lessons, spoke to pupils and listened to some pupils reading to an adult. I evaluated responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 45 free-text responses and 44 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Summit Learning multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector