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Robyn Parry-McDermott
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Dear Mrs Parry-McDermott

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thrybergh 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school 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:

- develop the role of subject leaders in some areas of the curriculum, such as history, geography and art, so that they can take a lead role in developing practice throughout the school

- implement your plans to revisit areas of learning so that pupils remember more
- engage with parents to support them in helping their children to remember more of the things they learn in school.

Context

During periods of partial closure due to COVID-19, most of the usual curriculum was covered. Work in school mirrored that done remotely at home. However, most practical work, in subjects such as science and music, was avoided and taught when the school opened to all pupils.

COVID-19 has also impacted on leaders' plans for improvement. For example, it allowed more time for subject leaders to refine their plans for subjects in the wider curriculum. They were able to work on these with staff from other schools in the trust. However, there has been little time with all pupils in school to fully implement changes and to measure the impact of these.

There have been no changes to staffing since the last section 5 inspection in October 2019. Some new governors have been recruited. The current chair of governors was in post at the time of the last inspection. The position was filled by another governor for a short period of time between this and the last section 5 inspection.

Main findings

Leaders have high ambitions for the school and they want the best for the pupils in their care. They are working collaboratively with the trust with this aim in mind. Plans for improvement focus on the things that will improve the quality of education for all pupils. Leaders consider the workload and well-being of staff and give them access to quality training.

During the recent periods of partial closure, you worked effectively to support all pupils and their families. This helped to improve relationships with parents, although many still do not engage with you. You have a system in place to communicate regularly with all parents. This system could now be used to tell parents about the things that their children are learning in school. Then parents would be in a better position to help their children to remember this learning.

Following the last section 5 inspection, you were tasked with improving your curriculum. Leaders have worked with the trust to make sure current curriculum plans clearly show what pupils should cover in each subject in each year from Nursery to Year 6. Goals are in place for each term for each subject for each year group. Checks are made on recent learning in all subjects. However, plans to assess what pupils know and can remember from previous work are in the early stages of development. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection could remember

some knowledge from very recent learning but struggled to recall more than topic headings from prior work.

You have developed your plans for the curriculum for personal development. Pupils now learn about different religions and cultures. They have opportunities to work together and to take part in debate. A pledges system has been introduced. Lists of activities have been developed under three headings: active citizenship, lifeskills and cultural experiences. Pupils are challenged to complete these activities in school, through extra-curricular opportunities and at home. These activities are designed to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.

You are keen to continue to develop teachers' subject knowledge. You want all teachers to have enough knowledge to not only teach the full curriculum but to be able to make links with different areas of learning. You are beginning to work with secondary colleagues to plan this work.

You were asked to improve the quality of education in the early years. You have made sure that pupils have lots of opportunities to practise and revisit what they have learned with their teacher. For example, last week children did work on recognising and exchanging coins with their teacher. They now have opportunities to use their knowledge in their play to buy items with coins. Children are given lots of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills and to practise their early writing skills every day.

You were also tasked with improving support for pupils in the early stages of learning to read. You have introduced a new programme for reading. Teachers and teaching assistants have had training and have access to ongoing support. You have invested in phonically decodable books and make sure that these pupils use them to practise reading both in school and at home.

Since the last inspection, some new governors have been recruited. All governors have a job description and have benefited from bespoke training. They receive a wealth of information from school leaders. This includes a newly designed, detailed headteacher's report and termly goals on your plans for improvement. This puts them in a good position to hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions. Their challenge is usually focused around the areas for improvement from the previous section 5 inspection. They provide support to make sure that staff well-being is considered, along with staff workload.

Additional support

Wickersley Partnership Trust leaders want you to focus on being a leader of learning. They make sure you have time to do this by providing support for other tasks, such as making sure that risk assessments are in place. There are two other strands of support: development of the curriculum and the development of subject leadership. Schools and members of the trust central team have worked together to

develop plans for all subjects. Subject leaders have the support of Specialist Leaders of Education and the Executive Improvement Partner. This is enabling some subject leaders to oversee the implementation and monitor the impact of curriculum plans.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer and the chair of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited every class, looked at work with pupils and observed pupils reading to familiar adults. I also considered the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Wickersley Partnership Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector