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Dear Mrs Talbot

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abram Bryn Gates Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 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:

- refine curriculum plans, in some subjects other than English and mathematics, so that they are well sequenced and clearly define the knowledge pupils should learn and by when
- ensure that subject leaders check how well the new curriculum plans help pupils to know and remember more.

Context

Since the inspection in March 2020, one teacher has left the school. A temporary teacher has joined the school until the end of the summer term 2021.

Main findings

You and other leaders have continued to focus on the areas for improvement from the inspection in March 2020. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, you have developed many aspects of the school. Your detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses has allowed you to focus on the essential areas for improvement, such as the curriculum.

You have introduced an improved and well-ordered reading curriculum. Staff have been suitably trained so that they can deliver the reading curriculum effectively. Pupils receive regular support with their reading from experienced staff when they need it. This helps pupils who are struggling with their reading to get back on track.

You have also invested in new reading books across the school. You acted swiftly, following the monitoring inspection in January 2021, to make sure that older pupils read books that are well matched to their reading ability. This is improving their reading confidence and fluency.

You have made considerable improvements to the mathematics curriculum and invested in suitable resources to support pupils' learning. The curriculum enables pupils to build their mathematical knowledge over time. This is helping them to know and remember more of their learning. You have provided purposeful and effective training to staff. Pupils' books show that teachers are delivering the mathematics curriculum consistently well across the school.

You and other leaders have ensured that pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is stronger than it was before. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, now receive their entitlement to the national curriculum.

The curriculum plans in many subjects are well ordered and show the detailed knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it. However, this is not the case for all subjects. For example, the order in which pupils study history topics confuses their understanding of chronology. The pandemic has hindered some subject leaders from developing their curriculum plans further. In addition, subject leaders have not been able to fully check the difference that the new curriculum is making to pupils' learning.

Governors have a clear understanding of your work to date and the plans for future improvement. They have strengthened their ability to hold you to account to improve the school.

Additional support

You have worked alongside the local authority to ensure that additional support meets the needs of the school. This support has included leaders working with a national leader of education to develop the curriculum. Subject leaders now fulfil their roles more confidently.

You have also used the support available to improve teachers' subject knowledge. For example, teachers have observed design and technology workshops delivered by a subject specialist.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, pupils, staff, governors, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at examples of their work. I watched some pupils reading to a familiar adult. I also visited mathematics lessons with the deputy headteacher. I considered 16 responses to the staff survey. I also reviewed nine responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including six free-text comments.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Sproston
Her Majesty's Inspector