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Mrs Andrea Green  
Interim Headteacher  
Alfred Street Junior School  
Alfred Street  
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Northamptonshire  
NN10 9YS

Dear Mrs Green

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden**

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 four 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. 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:

- teach pupils how to be successful learners to strengthen their self-esteem and improve their attitudes to learning.

## **Context**

Leaders have continued with their drive to make improvements, despite the pandemic. However, the periods of lockdown have had an impact on pupils' learning. Some pupils did not regularly participate with remote education.

The interim headteacher joined the school in April 2021. The school's inclusion leader has taken on the role of leader for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

## **Main findings**

Leaders are taking appropriate action to remedy the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The school's improvement plan sets out what they need to do to improve. Leaders and governors are using this plan to keep track of what they need to do next. Governors are increasing their monitoring of school improvement. They are checking leaders' actions more carefully to make sure what they are being told is happening.

Leaders have begun to make improvements to the school's curriculum. They have planned an overview of the content pupils will learn. This overview shows how knowledge should develop as pupils move through the school. In some subjects such as history and science they have planned what pupils will learn in more detail. Some teachers are leading curriculum development in several subjects. To make workload manageable for these teachers, leaders have prioritised which subjects should be reviewed first.

As the curriculum is still under development in some subjects, teachers are still not clear how they should teach some content. Their ambition for what pupils should be able to do is not always high enough. When staff are less confident with their subject knowledge, occasionally, they do not use learning resources that support pupils to learn what is intended in the school's curriculum plans.

Leaders have introduced a programme to help pupils who are at an early stage of reading development. Staff check what sounds pupils know. Pupils are remembering more sounds and are using these when reading. Since September, around two thirds of pupils who started on the programme no longer need this extra support. Occasionally, the books that staff ask pupils to read are too easy for them. There is a lack of ambition for these pupils. A few pupils need further support to recognise and blend sounds together to read words.

The support for pupils with SEND is improving. The leader for pupils with SEND is ambitious for all. The aim is for all pupils with SEND to spend most of the time in class, learning with their peers. Staff are becoming more confident to adapt learning

to suit the needs of all pupils. This includes making classrooms as inclusive as possible to all learners.

Pupils understand the school's values. They recognise how these affect their behaviour to others. Some pupils have negative attitudes towards their own learning. Some say they do not speak up in class as they are afraid other pupils will laugh at them if they get something wrong. Some pupils do not know what successful learning looks like. They lack belief in their ability to learn and remember things.

The school's culture for keeping pupils safe is strong. Staff know that it is their duty to pass on any concerns they may have, no matter how small. They know that the piece of information they pass on might be vital.

### **Additional support**

The local authority has provided valuable support to the school. It has targeted the areas the school needs to work on most. This has included support for subject leaders and advice to help develop the phonics programme. Leaders have acted on the advice they have been given, which is helping to improve the school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also visited lessons with leaders, listened to pupils read, looked at pupils' workbooks, scrutinised curriculum documents and safeguarding records.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**