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Terry Ryan
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Dear Mr Ryan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ferring C of E Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 June 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 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:

- improve the organisation of the curriculum so that what pupils need to know, and the order in which they should learn it, is clear in all subjects
- sharpen the school improvement plan so that leaders and governors can monitor and evaluate actions more effectively.

Context

In January 2021, the acting headteacher was appointed and an acting deputy headteacher was seconded from a local school. Since the previous inspection, two new teachers have been appointed to teach Year 1 and Year 2. A new chair of governors and a new governor have also joined the school.

Main findings

Since your appointment as acting headteacher in January 2021, you have made steady improvements to the school. Prior to this, difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had slowed the pace of change. You have brought a new sense of urgency to the school. You and your staff are ambitious for pupils and motivated to continue to make the changes that are required.

Together with subject leaders, you have made changes to the way the curriculum is organised. In art and design, for example, you have sequenced learning logically so that pupils are able to link what they have learned before with their current learning. However, subject leaders have not yet identified what they want pupils to learn in all subjects.

Pupils' writing is improving. In English, teachers are developing a consistent approach to helping pupils to write more extensively and enrich their vocabulary. Pupils' spelling is also improving because staff now help pupils to remember how to spell more complex words as they move through the school. Staff explained that competitions encourage pupils to develop their writing and spelling. For example, the school's 'spelling quest' and 'writing wall' reward pupils in all year groups for learning their spellings and improving their writing. In early years, children begin to write sentences. They respond well to teachers' instructions and enjoy learning in a rich environment.

Teachers' increasingly skilful teaching and higher expectations mean pupils are developing more secure knowledge, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants, who help them to correct their mistakes and extend their understanding.

Your approach to improving pupils' behaviour has dramatically decreased incidents of low-level disruption. Pupils are now more attentive, well-mannered and enthusiastic. They concentrate better in lessons. They told me that pupils' behaviour is now much more positive. Pupils enjoy school. They also explained that bullying is very rare.

Staff are proud to work in the school. They feel well supported by leaders and believe that they have benefited from the training that has been provided. Staff

have enjoyed working with the various sources of external support that have been organised by leaders and the local authority.

Governance has been strengthened since the previous inspection. Recent additions to the governing body have increased governors' expertise and skills. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You acknowledge that your plans for improvement are not as clear as they could be. You are in the process of redesigning these plans so that leaders and governors can monitor and evaluate them more effectively.

Additional support

The local authority has brokered several sources of external support for the school. These include the services of a national leader for education and support from the local authority school improvement partner. The diocese has worked closely with the local authority in reviewing improvements and helping leaders with recruitment. Leaders value this support.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, staff, governors, a representative of the local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Chichester to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's improvement plan. Together, you and I visited lessons to observe learning. I also looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to a group of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector