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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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David England
Executive headteacher
Riders Infant School
Kingsclere Avenue
Leigh Park
Havant
Hampshire
PO9 4RY

Dear Mr England

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Riders Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 8 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 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:

- ensure all staff are sufficiently trained so that they are expert in the delivery of the redesigned curriculum for the foundation subjects

- develop teachers' skills in the support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that their teaching is adapted to meet individual needs.

Context

Since the last inspection, governors have recruited a head of school and you as executive headteacher for the infant and junior schools.

Main findings

You and the head of school have set about making the required improvements to the quality of education at the school. You have increased the expertise and skills of your middle leaders. You have been able to maintain the pace of change this year despite the disruption caused by COVID-19. Now, you are poised to build on this firm base and introduce further developments.

Your focus on refreshing the school values has established positive attitudes among the pupils. Pupil attendance has gone up. The high number of exclusions in the past has dropped to almost none this year. During the inspection, pupils were keen to talk about the importance of respect for others.

A major priority has been the focus on reading. At the start of the academic year, you judged the teaching of phonics to be too inconsistent. You took immediate action to improve the provision. The head of school has led on setting clear expectations of what teachers should teach and how. Staff are now much more confident in their teaching of phonics. Building on this, you have planned to introduce a new phonics programme in September. Staff will be fully trained to deliver this.

You have introduced some improvements to the curriculum content of the foundation subjects this year. However, you have rightly assessed that there is more to do. Pupils' knowledge in all subjects is not sufficiently broad or deep. To address this, you have devised a fully planned and sequenced curriculum which teachers will deliver from September. Staff will receive training to ensure that they are confident in their subject knowledge.

Finally, you have identified the support for pupils with SEND to be a pressing priority. These pupils are well known in the school. Their needs are now well identified. However, strategies for supporting their learning in class are not consistently used. Your monitoring has told you this. A key expectation from September is for teachers to fully implement the personal learning plans for each pupil with SEND.

You and your governors have set out a clear path for improvement. You are making sure that the changes you have made are strong enough to support further

development. Governors support and challenge in this work by monitoring carefully the progress the school makes. They are well informed about what is needed and work with you to push ahead on the agreed priorities.

Additional support

You have received from the local authority a range of support that is ongoing. This has included support from advisers in mathematics and English, which has informed the work and training of your teachers. You have also taken advice from the inclusion adviser so that your teachers are better equipped to provide for all pupils in their classes. You have worked with the authority and Teach First to provide targeted training for your middle leaders. The local authority offers reviews of the school's work throughout the year. These assist you in understanding what progress has been made.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, representatives of those responsible for governance and representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and the school's own self-evaluation. I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I considered 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 7 free-text comments. I also took account of 12 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Yasmin Maskatiya
Her Majesty's Inspector