

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 June 2021

Helen Weston
Headteacher
Roe Farm Primary School
Worcester Crescent
Chaddesden
Derby
Derbyshire
DE21 4HG

Dear Mrs Weston

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Roe Farm 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 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:

- ensure that curriculum planning is completed and is in place for all subjects
- check that the curriculum plans are followed by teachers and are making a difference to what pupils know and remember.

Context

Since the previous inspection in March 2020 the school has experienced a significant number of temporary changes in staffing. At the time of the inspection almost one third of the teaching staff were on maternity leave.

Leaders have written plans that identify what the school needs to do to improve. While leaders have completed much of the work identified in these plans, some aspects have been slowed by COVID-19. At times during the past year, leaders' priorities have needed to change. For example, prioritising the provision of remote education for the majority of pupils during the partial school closure in the early months of 2021. Leaders and governors have needed to balance the speed at which they drive forward school improvement, taking into account the well-being of staff during this challenging year.

Pupils have settled back into school quickly. Teachers have checked what pupils can remember after the partial school closure and made sure that any gaps in their learning are being addressed. Leaders know that some pupils have struggled to manage their feelings because of the pandemic. Additional pastoral support has been put in place for the pupils who need it.

Main findings

Leaders are ambitious that all pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are being considered closely. Leaders waste no time in identifying pupils with additional needs. For example, a member of staff with specialist speech and language training works in the Nursery Year. This means that children who have communication difficulties are spotted as they begin school and the help they need is put in place. Leaders work closely with families to access external services and organisations. All of the parents of pupils with SEND, who responded to the online survey, agreed that the school gave their child the support they needed to succeed.

Improving the teaching of phonics has been a high priority for leaders. They have rewritten the phonics curriculum to make sure that the sounds pupils need to learn, and when, is clearer. Teachers check frequently which sounds pupils can remember. Pupils who are struggling to keep up are identified quickly and given extra lessons

to help them to catch up. Leaders have introduced 'non-negotiables' for teaching phonics. These 'non-negotiables' include how teachers should structure their lessons and the language they should use when they are teaching phonics. However, this is not consistently followed in all classes. Some teachers do not know how to teach phonics well enough. When it is not taught well, teachers do not use 'pure sounds' or use the right words in their explanations.

Leaders have introduced a new reading scheme for all year groups. Books are chosen carefully for younger pupils to make sure that the sounds in their reading book matches their phonic knowledge. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading. All pupils have their own copy of the text they are reading in class. Each class has adopted an author which has helped to engage pupils in reading more widely.

Leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum and teachers are developing new plans for all subjects. In some subjects the curriculum has been planned in a structured way, such as geography, and design and technology. In these subjects, curriculum leaders have identified what pupils need to learn and made sure that new knowledge will build on what pupils already know. In other subjects, leaders know that there is still work to be done. It is leaders' intention that all curriculum plans, for all subjects, will be in place by September 2021.

In some subjects, curriculum leaders have checked that teaching is making a difference to what pupils know and remember. However, the pandemic has affected the rigour with which these checks have been completed. Further monitoring is planned to ensure that the completed curriculum is delivered more effectively.

Governors know how important it is that leaders develop a detailed and well-considered curriculum. Each governor is linked to and is responsible for a specific subject. They are holding leaders to closer account for improving the curriculum. Governors hold regular discussions with senior and subject leaders to make sure that pupils are receiving a better quality of education.

Pupils are proud of their school. They say that their teachers are kind and make learning fun. Pupils know that it is important to show respect to everyone.

Additional support

Leaders have received support from the local authority and a specialist leader in education to develop the school's curriculum, including the early years curriculum. While the school has used this support to help them plan the content and sequence of learning in some subjects, there is more work to do. There are further plans in place to seek external support to develop the role of subject leaders.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke to a group of subject leaders, leaders responsible for pupils with SEND and a small group of pupils. I visited five phonics lessons and observed pupils reading with a familiar adult. I reviewed documents relating to the school's curriculum planning, the school's development plan and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 25 free-text responses, and 29 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 Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Poole
Ofsted Inspector