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Andy Krabbendam  
Interim Headteacher  
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S63 6NF

Dear Mr Krabbendam

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Melton Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 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.**

## **Context**

There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection, including your appointment as interim headteacher in February 2021. The deputy headteacher was appointed to the role permanently, following her interim senior leader post. Over half of teaching staff have left and leaders have recruited new teachers to replace them. Two teaching assistants and the business manager have left the school. A new administrator was appointed. Most of the governing body are new to the school, including the chair of governors. The school is in the process of becoming an academy.

Prior to March 2020, leaders were reviewing and developing the school's curriculum. This work was interrupted and delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and significant staff absences. However, this term, leaders have renewed the focus on developing the curriculum.

## **Main findings**

Since your recent appointment, you have acted swiftly and decisively to address the right priorities at the right time. Senior leaders have rewritten the school's improvement plan. The plan now focuses suitably on tackling the areas for improvement identified in the last section 5 inspection. Leaders show a clear understanding of what the school does well, and what more is needed to improve the school.

Leaders have improved the school's work to support pupils with early reading and phonics. You have invested in new books and every class has a library. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly with staff and at home. The books pupils read are well aligned to their phonics knowledge, which helps them to build their confidence. Pupils enjoy reading. The leader for phonics has provided helpful training for staff. Most adults teach phonics well. However, some inconsistencies remain. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to address this.

Since the previous inspection, subject leaders have reviewed and developed their long-term curriculum plans. They have checked that curriculum plans match the scope of the national curriculum. In some subjects, leaders have carefully identified the important knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn. This is especially the case in history. Well sequenced curriculum plans are helping teachers to support pupils to build on their prior learning. As a result, pupils are learning and remembering more of the history curriculum over time.

Following the last inspection, leaders reflected on the mathematics scheme of work. They found that it did not allow pupils to return to previously taught mathematics concepts frequently enough. This prevented pupils from committing new learning to their long-term memory. Leaders have introduced new curriculum plans to address this. The revised curriculum is well planned and well sequenced. However, teachers are not consistently implementing the planned curriculum. This means that some pupils are still not achieving as well as they should.

The work to develop the curriculum in subjects such as science, computing, music and modern foreign languages was delayed because of COVID-19. These subjects are not as carefully planned as history, reading and mathematics. Subject leaders have not fully identified the crucial knowledge that they want pupils know in these subjects. Leaders are tackling this by working with external consultants to ensure that suitable curriculum plans are ready to be implemented by September 2021.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the early years curriculum. Staff focus on the development of childrens' language skills. This helps children to develop the necessary skills for early reading right from the start. Carefully selected mathematical resources help children to practise counting and recognise numbers. A range of assessments is used effectively to assess childrens' starting points. This ensures that appropriate support is put in place where it is needed. Most children are well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils' attendance has improved. You have carefully monitored the attendance of pupils. Where appropriate, you have challenged parents of pupils who do not attend as often as they should. This is resulting in significant improvements and overall pupils' attendance is now in line with national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. However, although persistent absence is decreasing, it remains too high.

Governors are fully supportive of your work to improve the school. They have successfully managed a period of instability in the school's leadership team. Until recently, governors have not challenged leaders well enough on the areas that need to improve. They have been too accepting of what leaders told them. More recently, minutes of governing body meetings show that governors are now holding leaders to account more robustly.

The quality of leadership has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders rigorously monitor and review progress against their clear improvement plan. Senior leaders are holding middle leaders to account more effectively and have a clear view of those aspects of middle leadership which still require some development.

## **Additional support**

The local authority has provided extensive support since the last inspection, including support to improve the quality of governance. Support from specialist leaders in education in English and mathematics has shaped useful training for teachers in these subject areas.

The local authority has brokered support for middle leaders to visit other schools and learn from their good practice. This has been particularly beneficial to some middle leaders in strengthening their work. However, staffing changes and COVID-19 have meant that the support to date has not brought about consistent improvement since the previous inspection in all areas of middle leadership.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, two members of the senior leadership team, teaching and support staff. I reviewed the school's single central register. I held discussions with representatives of those responsible for governance. I held a video call with a representative of the local authority. These meetings provided opportunities to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I completed a range of other inspection activities. I scrutinised documents, including the school's improvement plan, minutes from governors' meetings, behaviour and attendance records and curriculum plans. I considered responses to Ofsted's surveys completed by parents and staff. I visited lessons, examined a sample of pupils' mathematics books and met with a group of pupils from across year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Watt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**