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Sarah Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oakfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 three 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 that the wider curriculum is clearly planned and sequenced from the early years onwards, so that it is clear what knowledge pupils will learn at each stage of their journey
- provide a consistent, whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics in whole-class input, small groups, and when reading with individual pupils
- develop a purposeful outdoor environment in the early years setting so that children have the resources they need to build early language and mathematics knowledge.

Context

Leaders and teachers have continued to work on improving the school. The ability of leaders and governors to check the impact of this work was initially restricted by COVID-19. However, link governor visits resumed in September 2020 and these have continued throughout the current academic year.

There have been no significant changes to teaching staff. A new school business manager was appointed in September 2020 and five governors have joined the governing body since the previous inspection in November 2018.

Main findings

There is a vibrant atmosphere and caring ethos throughout school. This has been developed by you and your leaders, who clearly care for this school and its community. During COVID-19, you offered your premises to support pupils from local schools and became a teaching hub. Bespoke pastoral support was available for all families and this has continued as all pupils have returned to school.

The pupils I talked to feel safe and well supported. They speak confidently about why school is a safe place for them and how the adults in school support them. Pupils are able to talk about the rhymes and songs that help them to remember important knowledge.

A strengthening of leadership and management since the last inspection is evident. You and your leadership team know the school well. You have proactively sought professional development opportunities and peer support in order to maintain a robust focus on school improvement.

A curriculum review has been undertaken over the last two years with the support of the local authority. This has developed staff understanding of how pupils learn. However, curriculum plans do not yet show what pupils are expected to know and

remember. As a result, prior knowledge is not built upon consistently across a series of lessons or from year to year.

The early reading leader has worked closely with the English hub to ensure that all staff are trained to teach phonics. This work is at a very early stage. Phonics is not yet taught with fidelity to the school's chosen scheme. When children read with an adult, the adult does not consistently model the chosen methods to help pupils apply their phonics knowledge in order to segment, blend and comprehend the words they are expected to read.

The relationships between adults and children in the early years setting are strong. Children listen well during whole-class and small-group input. However, there are many missed opportunities to engage in deeper learning within the wider environment. Resources to support children in building their early language and mathematical knowledge are not well developed in the setting, particularly outdoors.

Governors chair half-termly progress meetings to check on the effectiveness of actions taken by school leaders. They ask challenging questions across a range of areas. This holds leaders to account. Governors are considerate of the well-being of staff and support their continued professional development.

Additional support

You have been proactive in seeking a wealth of external support, including developing a partnership with a local headteacher colleague as part of a peer leadership programme. You have initiated a soft federation with your feeder secondary school and worked with the local English and mathematics hubs. This has all contributed to the improvements now seen in the school.

Governors have worked with the local authority and also accessed training through the National Governance Association. School leaders and members of the governing body feel well supported by these external partners and this has enabled them to increase their leadership capacity.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I listened to pupils reading with adults in school, visited lessons, scrutinised documentation, including school improvement and curriculum plans, and checked responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and parents.

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 Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Zoe Lightfoot
Her Majesty's Inspector