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Dear Mrs Thorne

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Peterbrook Primary School

Following my visit to your school with Helen Forrest, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), on 16 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 a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

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:

- evaluate the impact of the redesigned curriculum to inform further improvements, particularly in the foundation subjects

- ensure that the lines of accountability for the teaching of early reading are clear
- ensure that the school development plan makes it clear who is responsible for checking the impact of the actions, and when these activities will take place.

Context

Since the last full inspection, new governors have been appointed to the governing body. Some of leaders' plans to further develop the school's new curriculum were affected by COVID-19. As a result, some subjects have been developed more than others.

Main findings

Leaders have high aspirations for what the school and its pupils can achieve. They have taken appropriate actions to address the areas identified at the previous section 5 inspection. They have a clear focus on school improvement. Leaders know what actions they need to take. These actions are reflected in the school development plan. It is clear in the school's development plan how governors will test the impact of leaders' actions. However, the plan does not specify which leaders are responsible for checking the progress of the actions or when this will happen. This does not promote a sense of urgency and could lead to increases in workload.

Leaders have prioritised curriculum development. A new curriculum has been designed. Because of COVID-19, this has not progressed as quickly as leaders would have liked. As a result, some subjects are further developed than others. Leaders need to make further checks on the curriculum to see if they need to make changes, particularly in the foundation subjects.

Reading is a key focus for the school. Staff have completed phonics teaching training. There is a structured approach to the teaching of reading through guided reading and English lessons from Years 1 to 6. A structured reading programme starts in Reception. Reading books match the sounds that children are learning. Regular phonics assessments in the early years help to identify children who need extra support. Yet this help does not include hearing children read every day. Leaders are not clear where the responsibility for the teaching of early reading in the early years sits. The lack of ownership of this responsibility may hinder children's progress.

The redesign of the curriculum includes extra time for the teaching of mathematics. Pupils use the time to practise and recall key knowledge. This is helping pupils to develop mathematical fluency. Training for staff on the use of effective questioning is helping pupils to develop their reasoning. Year 5 pupils, for example, show they

can apply previous learning about conversion to solve problems. Pupils can explain how they came to the right answers. Leaders use regular assessment to identify gaps in pupils' learning. For example, Year 3 are revisiting fractions as they missed this topic last year due to COVID-19.

Leaders have a clear plan for the teaching of writing. This starts in the early years. There is a structured approach to the development of writing. As a result, children use their phonics well to help them spell. Teachers have been trained in the teaching of writing. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 can write extended pieces of work in a variety of styles. This is not as well developed in key stage 1.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has carried out an audit of the provision in key stage 1 and 2 for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has helped to identify the extra training that staff and support staff need. This includes, for example the use of resources in literacy and numeracy to support pupils' learning.

Governors are committed to the school. They are reflective and look at how they can improve their practice. For example, they used the findings of the external review of governance in November 2018 well. Governors use a yearly skills audit to inform them of extra training they may need. As a result, governors are more knowledgeable about, for example, the use of assessment information. This means that they can ask challenging questions of leaders and hold them to account for their actions. Leaders consider staff well-being and workload. Consequently, staff morale is high.

Additional support

Leaders value the challenge and support meetings held with the local authority. These meetings, together with reviews carried out by the local authority, have helped leaders to accurately evaluate the impact of their actions.

Evidence

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

Inspectors looked at several documents, including the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at work in pupils' books and talked to staff and pupils at lunchtime. An inspector examined the single central register of staff recruitment checks.

Inspectors considered the 67 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 43 free-text responses, and 37 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 Solihull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Yates
Her Majesty's Inspector