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Kelly Hunter
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Hunter

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingshurst Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 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.

Context

You started as headteacher in September 2019. Five teachers have joined the school and one teacher has left since the previous section 5 inspection. A behaviour and pastoral manager joined the school in November 2020.

Two new governors have been appointed recently. A new chair of governors was elected in September 2019.

In September 2019, the school started to increase the number of pupils that it admits into Reception Year. Reception Year and Year 1 now have three classes in each year group. Leaders intend for this expansion to continue until all year groups have three classes.

Main findings

You lead the school well. You have worked hard to increase leaders' focus on speeding up improvement work. Leaders now have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. You ensure that they have sufficient time and resources to work effectively. This has helped them to take the necessary actions to address past weaknesses in the quality of education. As a result, the school has improved since the previous section 5 inspection, although you are aware that there is still more work to do.

Governance of the school was identified as an area for improvement at the last monitoring inspection. Governors have now started to hold leaders to account more effectively. They have begun to ask more specific questions to understand the impact of the school's curriculum. They have revised a system to monitor the work that middle leaders are doing. Governor panels now scrutinise specific areas of leaders' work, such as safeguarding and inclusion. However, this work is in its early stages. There is more to do to involve governors in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of school improvement plans.

Leaders use individual action plans to steer their improvement work. These plans are precise and clear. The leadership team meets regularly to discuss and evaluate the difference that its actions are making. However, the whole-school improvement plan and self-evaluation document do not always evidence this work. You are now taking steps to improve the effectiveness of these documents so that they assist governors in their duty to hold leaders to account.

Leaders emphasise staff development in their approach to school improvement. They invest their time to coach curriculum leaders. They distribute roles and responsibilities when appropriate. They encourage staff teams to focus on developing specific areas of the curriculum. Staff are motivated and want to be involved in this work. Consequently, staff subject knowledge is improving. This means that they can deliver better teaching to pupils.

Leaders acted quickly to improve the teaching of mathematics after the previous section 5 inspection. Curriculum plans now contain the essential knowledge and skills that leaders expect pupils to learn in each year group. The mathematics curriculum leader has a deep knowledge of the subject and uses this expertise to coach and develop other staff. This has improved the consistency of the way that they deliver the curriculum. In addition, staff are now more confident about how to teach mathematics well. As a result, the work that pupils produce is improving.

Leaders introduced new schemes of work to teach pupils how to read and write before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. They provided training to ensure that staff understood these new approaches to teaching English. Leaders have made reading a particular priority since all pupils returned to school on 8 March 2021. Pupils who are still learning to read receive additional phonics lessons and targeted support from adults. All teachers read to their classes every day. Many pupils in Years 3 to 5 benefit from one-to-one tutoring to help them develop their ability in reading comprehension. Although some pupils are still behind where you would usually expect them to be, leaders' actions ensure that pupils are catching up. You intend to continue this catch-up work in the next academic year.

At the last monitoring inspection, you were asked to ensure that planning in foundation subjects includes the knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Leaders immediately started work to improve planning in these subjects. For example, they adopted new curriculum plans for art. They also arranged training to ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to teach art well. In addition, curriculum leaders provided pupils with 'knowledge organisers' that clearly set out the important information that pupils need to know and remember. Leaders' actions are working but more time is required before they can fully evaluate the impact on pupils' learning.

Additional support

You welcome the support and guidance that is provided by the local authority and other local schools. A local authority review has reassured you that actions to improve the teaching of reading are working. This reassurance has boosted leaders' confidence. You have arranged for further local authority reviews to support improvement work in foundation subjects.

Curriculum leaders have benefited from opportunities to work with a senior leader of education. In addition, they have worked with teachers from other local schools to learn from shared practice. This has helped curriculum leaders to carefully consider the sequence in which subject material is taught. As a result of this support, subject leaders have grown in confidence. This has enabled them to develop and support other teachers.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and pupils. I also discussed the actions taken since the last inspection with representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority.

I looked at the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation document and minutes of governors' meetings. I checked the school's single central register of checks on staff, volunteers and visitors. I looked at curriculum plans along with pupils' workbooks. In addition, I reviewed responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses, and 42 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

Jonathan Leonard
Her Majesty's Inspector