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Shoab Uddin
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Uddin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Agnes C of E Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

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 teachers enable pupils to make more connections between essential knowledge and key ideas within and across subjects.

Context

After a period of being the acting headteacher, you were appointed to the role of substantive headteacher in September 2019. Your appointment was made shortly after the previous inspection. Five members of the teaching staff have left the school since the previous inspection. Four new teachers have been appointed. Three governors have left the governing body. Two new governors have been appointed.

Main findings

You and other leaders have drawn up a suitable plan of action to address the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at the previous inspection. The plan contains the appropriate priorities required to improve the school. It is sufficiently detailed and ambitious. For example, your improvement plan focuses on ensuring that the curriculum allows all pupils to know and remember more. You and the governing body regularly evaluate what you have achieved. There is secure evidence that the quality of education is improving.

You and the governing body have established a stable leadership team across the school. You have wasted no time in building leadership capacity. You have taken effective action to revise leadership roles and responsibilities. This includes ensuring that there is increasing oversight of the quality of the curriculum.

As part of your oversight of the curriculum, you and other leaders have developed appropriate ways to check that staff are implementing the curriculum effectively and consistently. For example, you have put in place regular opportunities to check the quality of pupils' work. Teachers know what leaders expect from them.

Leaders have put effective ways of assessing pupils' learning in place. You and other leaders now have an increasingly strong understanding of how successfully pupils are acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need across subjects. Teachers are using assessment information more effectively. They are planning activities that match more closely to pupils' needs. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

You have fully implemented a new approach to teaching the mathematics curriculum. Pupils have more opportunities to explain their learning and to practise their reasoning and problem-solving skills. During the time that I was in school, it was clear that pupils were eager mathematicians. They were confident to participate in activities.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to revise the curriculum for subjects such as science, geography and history. You now have consistent curriculum plans in place for all subjects. These plans are increasingly ambitious, carefully ordered and outline the core knowledge that you want pupils to know and remember. However, some teachers do not use the revised curriculum plans to help pupils to make connections between essential learning within and across subjects.

You have an effective approach to the teaching of phonics from the Nursery Class through to Year 2. Teachers are adept at using assessment information to identify how well pupils recognise and use letters and the sounds that they represent. Those pupils who struggle with phonics, including some pupils who are international new arrivals, and those with SEND, are helped to catch up quickly. Support staff are well trained and experienced at supporting pupils who struggle. Pupils who have previously found reading difficult are becoming more confident and fluent readers.

The effectiveness of the governing body is improving. Governors are increasingly confident in holding you and other leaders to account. Governors ask you more searching questions, including about the development of the curriculum.

Additional support

You are making the most of all the support available from the local authority and the Diocese of Manchester. Staff have received training to develop their curriculum plans. Additional support has also developed leadership capacity across the school. The effectiveness of the governing body has been enhanced by recent training.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the SEND coordinators. I spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I also met with two representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection and the level of support that has been provided. I met with a group of pupils.

I examined a variety of documentation, including the school improvement plan, the minutes of governing body meetings and curriculum plans. I visited classrooms to look at learning and pupils' work in mathematics. I observed a small number of pupils reading with a teacher or teaching assistant. I also considered the three responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector