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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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8 July 2021

Nicola Davies
Executive Headteacher
Holgate Primary and Nursery School
High Leys Road
Hucknall
Nottinghamshire
NG15 6EZ

Dear Mrs Davies

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holgate Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that subject leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to check the school's curriculum is taught well, so that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn more and remember more
- establish a system that helps leaders and teachers to check what all pupils, including pupils with SEND, know and understand of the curriculum
- check that the teaching of phonics is consistent, and ensure that those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read receive effective teaching to help them catch up.

Context

Since the last inspection, one new governor and a new early years leader have been appointed. The school's curriculum leader is new to her role. The leader of mathematics joined the school this academic year. A special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) will start in the autumn term 2021.

COVID-19 has slowed some curriculum developments that leaders had planned. The pandemic has also affected the attendance of some pupils. Leaders have helped some families in getting their children to attend school.

Since the last inspection, in February 2021, leaders have accelerated their actions to improve the school's curriculum. COVID-19 has slowed some staff training. However, the school has used expertise, from within the group of schools to which it belongs, to ensure that curriculum developments have continued to take place.

Main findings

Leaders have taken significant steps to improve the school's curriculum. They have rechecked the curriculum, and found that it did not include all the knowledge they wanted pupils to learn. They have redesigned the curriculum so that it is more ambitious and clearly sets out what pupils need to know and when. Leaders are considering ways to help subject leaders and teachers to make checks on what pupils know and remember.

The new curriculum leader has recently worked alongside a colleague, who has similar responsibilities at another local school, to redesign the curriculum. Together they have now created plans that will help teachers to deliver lessons in an ordered way. Some subject curriculums, such as science and history, are more developed than others. The plans for all subjects will be ready for the start of the autumn term 2021.

Leaders know that for the curriculum to be successful, subject leaders will need to make checks on how effectively pupils are learning. Some subject leaders are

lacking the expertise to help them check on how well the curriculum is being taught. Leaders plan to use an agreed system to help all staff make checks on how the curriculum is remembered by pupils, including pupils with SEND.

Leaders continue to prioritise reading. They have changed phonics plans, and their approach to teaching, to make sure that pupils have the key knowledge to help them to read words. Support is in place for pupils who need extra help to keep up. Reading books in the early years, Year 1 and Year 2 are well matched to pupils' needs.

The teaching of phonics in the early years is now a strength. However, in other year groups, the teaching of early reading is inconsistent. Sometimes pupils are too reliant on adults for support. Some pupils do not get enough practice at early reading. Some staff do not have the knowledge they need to be able to teach phonics well. Leaders need to ensure that the pupils who are furthest behind in reading receive the most effective teaching to help them to catch up.

The school's inclusion team ensures that pupils attend school every day. The team helps teachers to understand how they can best support pupils with SEND. Leaders check that pupils with SEND are getting the right support during lessons. However, they have not yet considered how to check what pupils with SEND learn in different subjects. Leaders plan to develop clear curriculum plans to show what pupils with SEND need to know.

Governors understand the school's priorities. They provide support and challenge for leaders. They have checked that leaders have continued to develop the curriculum and the extent to which they have improved pupils' attendance. They understand that they will need to continue to make checks as the new curriculum is introduced. They know that subject leaders will need support to fulfil their roles effectively.

The school's plans for improvement support leaders in managing and developing the school further. Governors are using these plans to check the work of leaders.

Additional support

COVID-19 has limited some of the support the local authority has provided. The school has received training for teachers to check on pupils' writing. The local authority and leaders are developing a more specific programme of support that will help leaders to make further improvements in the autumn term 2021.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited science and phonics lessons. I observed pupils reading to a member of staff. I reviewed 35 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 31 free-text responses, and 37 staff questionnaire survey responses. I reviewed the school's improvement plans, curriculum plans, minutes of governors' meetings and reports from the local authority. I reviewed the single central record and checked behaviour logs.

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

Yours sincerely

Shaheen Hussain
Seconded Inspector of Schools