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14 July 2021

Mark Snow
Interim Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Snow

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Godshill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 July 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 there is fidelity to a well-structured phonics programme where pupils read books that match the sounds they have learned
- continue the work in each subject to plan and deliver the knowledge pupils need in logical steps across a series of lessons.

Context

Since the previous inspection in September 2019, an assistant headteacher and a school business manager have joined the school's leadership team. Three additional governors have joined the governing body.

There has been significant staffing absence because of COVID-19.

Main findings

You show determination to bring about change at Godshill. Staff absence as a result of the pandemic means you are not as far along with your plans to improve the school as you would like, but you remain undeterred. You are aspirational for all pupils and the quality of education is improving. You and your team are clear about the work that still needs to be done.

You are pressing on with developing the whole-school curriculum. You have completed all subjects other than music, which is underway. Subject leaders are taking the reins in leading their subject more confidently because of the training you are providing. They have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to be taught in their subject across each year group. This is well sequenced in many subjects so that pupils' knowledge builds from early years to Year 6. Subject leaders are now supporting staff in planning and delivering this knowledge in logical steps across a series of lessons.

You are promoting opportunities to support pupils' personal development. In religious education, pupils are learning about different religions and cultures, which is widening their horizons about life in modern Britain. Your recent 'Rainbow Day' taught pupils to respect and accept different types of family. Pupils I met with spoke maturely about this, saying 'anyone can be who they are.'

Pupils' love of reading is central to your curriculum. Pupils are accessing rich literature and in each class staff listen to pupils read regularly as part of 'Book Club'. However, there are inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. This is because not everyone uses the current scheme as it is intended. The books that younger pupils read sometimes are not well matched to the sounds they know. The approach to checking pupils' phonics knowledge does not help staff to know precisely if pupils are where they need to be on the programme. All of this is holding some pupils back from becoming fluent readers. You recognise that phonics teaching needs to improve and you are already in the process of choosing a new phonics programme.

You keep governors well informed of the impact of the actions to improve the school. Governors' monitoring has strengthened and in committee meetings they ensure they discuss the priorities on the school improvement plan. In the past year, governors have been dealing with operational matters within the federation.

Nonetheless, they have not let their focus slide from the job in hand of improving the quality of education for pupils.

Additional support

The local authority has helped you with improving leadership within the school so that leaders are better able to support school improvement. This work has been focused on developing subject leaders in their roles. The local authority is providing extra training for new governors to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to hold you to account.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, pupils, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I made visits to phonics lessons, heard pupils read and looked at work in different subjects. I reviewed the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, curriculum plans and monitoring reports from the local authority. I checked the single central record on the suitability of staff to work with children. I also looked at 18 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, and 52 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 10 free-text comments.

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

Yours sincerely

James Broadbridge
Her Majesty's Inspector