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16 July 2021

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Dear Miss Nussey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Paget Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 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:

- identify and sequence the small building blocks of knowledge that early years children need to achieve the high-level outcomes set out in curriculum plans

- provide pupils who are falling behind in phonics with the extra teaching they need to catch up quickly
- ensure that curriculum plans consistently identify all the essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn, and that this is broken down into suitably small, logical steps.

Context

Since the previous inspection, leadership responsibilities have been reviewed. Some leadership roles have been covered temporarily due to planned staff absence. One new governor has joined the governing body.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection, you acted quickly to review leaders' roles and responsibilities. These are now clear. There is a focus on improving the curriculum in key stages 1 and 2. Senior leaders share your determination to provide all pupils with a good quality of education. Together, you have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You use this knowledge to ensure that improvement plans concentrate mostly on the right things.

You have prioritised improving the reading, writing and mathematics curriculum. The phonics programme is becoming embedded. Staff in the early years and key stage 1 have received relevant training. They group pupils according to the sounds they need to learn. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. Teachers make regular checks on how pupils are doing. As a result, they know which pupils are falling behind. The weakest readers receive additional support to help them catch up. This is making a difference. However, pupils who are only just behind where they should be do not get the extra teaching they need. This means they do not catch up quickly enough.

In English and mathematics, leaders have set out what they want pupils to know at the end of each unit of work, term, year group and key stage. They have broken these end points down into small chunks of knowledge. In mathematics, teachers are delivering this curriculum and pupils' knowledge is building effectively. In English, some year groups have started to implement the new plans with the support of the subject leader. The remaining year groups will follow the curriculum from September.

Experienced leaders have improved the way in which some wider curriculum subjects are planned and delivered, for example religious education and music. In subjects where leaders are new to role, changes have been slower. In part, this is due to external support being delayed because of COVID-19. New leaders have received training. Their subject knowledge is growing. They know what pupils are learning. Now that external support is in place, curriculum improvements are

accelerating. Leaders have identified the high-level outcomes they want pupils to achieve in each subject. They have begun to map out some of the knowledge they want pupils to learn. This is stronger in some subjects than in others. There is more work to do to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects covers the essential knowledge pupils need, and that this is broken down into small steps.

At the previous inspection, inspectors highlighted weaknesses in the early years. Fluctuations in staff and COVID-19 have disrupted improvements. Leaders have not focused enough on putting a coherent curriculum in place. Leaders are clear about what children need to know by the end of the Reception Year. However, curriculum plans do not break this knowledge down. Sometimes, curriculum content does not build in a logical order. At times, there are big jumps between what children learn in one lesson and the next. This hinders children learning what they need to be ready for Year 1.

Leaders' work to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is proving effective. Teachers have a better understanding of individual pupils' needs. Pupils have more precise targets to help them move forward in their learning. Pupils in the resource base follow a highly personalised curriculum that meets their needs closely. Other pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. Where necessary, teachers spend longer teaching essential concepts. This ensures that these pupils have a secure understanding, for example in mathematics.

Leaders have strengthened their relationships with parents. COVID-19 has helped with this. Parents now receive direct feedback if they raise a concern about bullying. These incidents are rare. Parents and pupils say that leaders deal well with any incidents of bullying or falling out. School records support this.

Governors are effective in their role. They have established strong systems to check on leaders' actions and the impact of these. This means that governors know what is working well and what needs to improve. They concentrate their attention on the things that need to improve the most, for example early years.

Additional support

The local authority makes regular checks on the school's progress. Following the previous inspection, they put plans in place to help leaders address the school's weaknesses. However, much of this support was delayed because of COVID-19. Until recently, this slowed improvements to the wider curriculum and early years. Now that support is happening, the pace of improvement has picked up. Curriculum plans in subjects such as history and geography are being reviewed. Leaders are working with a National Leader of Education to improve provision in the early years. However, there is not enough focus on securing a coherently planned curriculum.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke with the local authority's priority improvement partner and the chair and vice chair of the governing body.

I reviewed curriculum plans and pupils' work with the subject leaders for English, mathematics, personal, social and health education, religious education, and music. I also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work in history and geography. I spoke with the geography subject leader. I visited phonics sessions and listened to pupils read to a familiar adult. I met with a group of pupils and a group of teachers.

I checked the school's single central register and scrutinised documentation relating to school improvement. I reviewed the responses to Ofsted's Parent View and the staff survey.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector