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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Craig Pickering-Mills
Headteacher
South Elmsall Carlton Junior and Infant School
Carlton Road
South Elmsall
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF9 2QQ

Dear Mr Pickering-Mills

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to South Elmsall
Carlton Junior and Infant 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 four 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 pupils in the early stages of their education have more opportunities to practise writing, using the knowledge acquired through phonics
- evaluate the success of the wider curriculum by checking that pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum you have planned.

Context

There have been no significant staffing changes or changes in governance since the last monitoring inspection.

School leaders and teachers have continued to improve the phonics programme and the wider curriculum. Some of the planned improvements have been slowed down by the impact of COVID-19.

Main findings

Leaders and governors are proud of the school. There is a lot of support and trust in the school from parents. This school is at the heart of the community. You and your team have maintained a much-needed focus on improving the school. You have done this while providing additional support for children and families throughout the pandemic. Parents commented very favourably on the support the school provided during the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities. During the COVID-19 restrictions, you focused on pupils' welfare and on providing remote education. While you have continued to address longer-term priorities, you recognise the need for greater urgency in this work. Plans to develop and improve writing, alongside early reading, need particular attention. In September 2020, you began to teach a new curriculum. You understand the importance of checking how well the curriculum is now taught and how this is reflected in pupils' knowledge.

The development of reading is a key priority. Your reading leader is working with a local English hub to improve phonics teaching. All staff have been trained to deliver the phonics programme consistently. You have recently devoted extra time to reading throughout the day. Many pupils remain behind in their early reading. This work to improve pupils' phonics is urgent and necessary. Pupils in the early stages of reading need more practise at writing to become more accurate in spelling and letter formation.

You have taken action to improve the quality of the wider curriculum. Smaller building blocks of knowledge allow pupils to understand ideas that are more complex. Some subjects, such as science and religious education, are further on

with this work than other subjects, such as computing. Subject leaders understand their role in supporting teachers to develop their subject expertise. The role of subject leaders in checking that pupils have learned the curriculum is less well developed.

Staff are very positive about working at the school. They feel that their workload is well managed. Leaders value the opinions of all staff. The staff feel respected. Training for staff is appropriately focused on the school development priorities.

There is a strong commitment to providing an enriched curriculum experience for pupils. You have sought alternatives where COVID-19 restrictions have hampered activities, for example the virtual tour of Chester Zoo to support the science curriculum. Pupils appreciate your commitment to returning to extra-curricular activities. Pupils told me that they were very pleased to be able to go swimming again.

Leaders have improved the mathematics curriculum. Lessons have a clear structure. Teachers model how to do the mathematics. Pupils then practise. The teacher checks for misconceptions and then works with pupils who need further help. This means that pupils have the understanding needed before moving on to more challenging mathematical procedures. Pupils said that they remember what they have learned in mathematics because the work from the previous day is displayed on the 'working wall'.

Governors have a good understanding of the school and the community. They hold school leaders to account. Governors carefully monitor the school improvement plan.

Additional support

Your staff are working with external partners to develop the curriculum. Teachers have improved the curriculum for reading and mathematics through links with English and mathematics hubs. Teachers have developed their subject knowledge through networks in the local authority. Additional support and scrutiny come from the local authority. This range of support is bringing about improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met a number of subject leaders. We discussed the actions taken to improve the school since the last inspection.

I undertook lesson visits in phonics and mathematics. I met a group of pupils to discuss behaviour and learning. I held discussions with members of the governing body. I looked at curriculum plans, some pupils' work and the school improvement

plan. I considered 47 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 42 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Carl Sugden
Ofsted Inspector