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Tracey Wynn  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Wynn

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Doxey Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 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 the school 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 not taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- re-visit planning in the foundation subjects to ensure that content and delivery meet the expectations set out in the national curriculum
- ensure all subject leaders are able to monitor and evaluate their subjects fully

- ensure that work is matched to pupils' abilities to improve their engagement and access to learning
- ensure that governors hold subject leaders fully to account and challenge them on the impact and effectiveness of their roles.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection in November 2019, there have been a small number of staff changes, including a change of early years leadership. At the time of this inspection, staff and pupils in Years 5 and 6 and members of the senior leadership team were self-isolating.

## **Main findings**

The pace of improvement towards addressing the key issues presented in the previous section 5 report has been too slow. Disruption caused by COVID-19 has, without doubt, contributed to the reduced effectiveness of leaders' actions. You and your governors have rightly focused on maintaining the stability of the school during the pandemic and have prioritised pupil well-being. However, at other times, too little attention has been given to curriculum development and significant weaknesses continue to exist. As a result, pupils have significant gaps in their general knowledge and skills, and low-level disruption in lessons continues to be a problem.

Leaders have devised a creative two-year rolling programme to deliver national curriculum objectives. Different subjects are taught within half-termly 'mini missions'. The pandemic has interrupted your implementation of some content and staff have not yet had an opportunity to deliver the complete cycle. This, in part, has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, even where planned content has been covered, work in pupils' books and discussions with pupils show that they gain very limited knowledge and understanding in subjects such as geography, science and history. This is because tasks are too superficial, and staff move on to new content too quickly. Too many tasks are worksheet based and do not require pupils to think for themselves or explain what they know. This means that pupils do not consolidate, deepen or apply their knowledge and skills sufficiently. Further work is therefore needed in curriculum planning to ensure content meets the expectations of the national curriculum.

Some subjects are taught discreetly, such as music and physical education (PE). Planning in PE is effective. It is well sequenced, and progression is evident. The full range of PE content is taught in each year group. This content is taught in the right order and enables pupils to improve their sports and dance techniques over time. Plans for the curriculum in other subjects, such as religious education, remain at an early stage of development. Leaders know what they want pupils to learn and have

linked subject content, where possible, to the whole-school curriculum plan. However, less attention has been given to identifying the subject-specific vocabulary needed to improve pupils' knowledge.

You have accessed some external support for subject leaders to help develop their leadership skills. Subject leaders have set out their vision and generated individual action plans. They are clear about what they want to achieve. However, the onus is on leaders to request release time to monitor and evaluate their subjects. To date, this has not materialised. Their monitoring and evaluation skills therefore remain underdeveloped. As a result, subject leaders do not know where weaknesses lie and are unable to address them.

You have focused intently on reducing the low-level disruption in school and, until recently, were having a good degree of success in this area. You feel that pupils have been significantly affected by the third lockdown imposed earlier this year and that this had a detrimental impact on pupils' mental health and anxiety. In response, you have engaged in the Staffordshire Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware school award. This has enabled you to reconsider your approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Regulation stations operate in classrooms and pupils are allowed to access these if they feel tense, anxious or frustrated. Nevertheless, too many pupils continue to remove themselves from directed tasks or continue to cause low-level disruption in lessons. This limits the progress pupils make. You acknowledge that this area needs further attention. You have plans in place for September to address this and are determined to regain the calm and orderly environment needed in school.

You have reviewed the provision and systems in place to ensure that the needs of the most able and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. Greater levels of challenge are presented for the most able in reading, writing and mathematics as expectations have been raised. However, challenge is less evident in the wider curriculum. Pupils with SEND receive effective additional one-to-one support and intervention. This helps improve their literacy and numeracy skills. However, some report that they still struggle with work set in lessons and this causes them to feel frustrated. These pupils then make use of the regulation stations but do not complete their work. Further attention is needed to ensure that work is matched to pupils' abilities across the curriculum.

You have taken effective action to improve the communication and language skills of children in the early years. All children are assessed on entry and those who need support receive speech and language interventions twice a week. Staff focus closely on developing children's vocabulary as soon as they join 'Sparkles', your two-year-old provision. Leaders also ensured that communication and language tasks and targets were continued throughout the lockdown periods. This ensured that the children did not regress. The curriculum has also been revised with a greater emphasis placed on literacy. Tasks are based on story books. This not only helps build children's language skills, but also their love of books. All adults model and

support language development to make sure that all children develop the skills and language they need to be able to communicate and participate fully in school life.

Governors are clear about their role. They are caring and mindful of leaders' well-being, as well as that of pupils. Governors carry out their statutory duties efficiently and monitor finance and safeguarding closely. However, minutes of curriculum meetings show that there is a lack of attention and challenge around the development of foundation subjects. While link governor roles have been created for some subjects, they are not in place for all subjects. Governors accept that progress since the previous inspection has not been as strong as it should be. They understand that curriculum development and behaviour modification are now a crucial part of the governors' monitoring to ensure that the school improves, and pupils receive a good quality of education.

### **Additional support**

The school has continued to receive regular support brokered through the local authority. Leaders and staff value this support and act upon the recommendations made.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held remote meetings with you and the assistant headteacher, a representative from the local authority and the leader for SEND. I met in school with curriculum leaders for English, PE, religious education and early years. I also held discussions with pupils and the chair of governors. The early years leader accompanied me on visits to classrooms and I observed pupils reading to the English leader.

I examined the school's single central record and safeguarding report produced by the local authority. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and the local authority's most recent school adviser report. I looked at curriculum plans and pupils' workbooks. I reviewed 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses, and 23 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

