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Rachel Anthony
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Dear Mrs Anthony

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thames View Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

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 curriculum plans identify the key knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn in each subject
- strengthen teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum
- further develop approaches to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that all pupils can access the full curriculum.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the teaching and support staff teams. Leaders have restructured staffing across the school.

You were appointed as headteacher in 2019 from your previous position as head of school. All other previous members of the senior leadership team have left the school and a new senior leadership team is now in place. A member of staff from the Partnership Learning Trust has joined the school as executive principal.

Leaders have employed a new special educational needs coordinator. They have supported this member of staff to ensure that he is fully qualified for the role.

A new chair of the local governing body was elected in July 2021. She is an experienced member of the governing body.

Main findings

School leaders and members of the multi-academy trust have taken robust action to improve the school. These actions are successfully tackling the areas for improvement that were identified in the previous inspection.

While the COVID-19 restrictions have slowed some of your plans for improvement, you and your team have not used this as a reason to delay making the changes that were needed at the school.

When pupils returned after the national lockdowns, teachers checked what pupils had remembered and what they had forgotten. They used this information to refine subject planning. For example, teachers noted that pupils had forgotten aspects of practical science, so they made sure to provide more opportunities for pupils to revisit their understanding.

You have introduced a new curriculum. Subjects are taught through a thematic approach. This means that pupils learn each theme over several weeks. The themes include subjects such as geography and science. Even though teachers plan activities that pupils enjoy, sometimes teachers are not clear about what they want pupils to know in each subject. Leaders have not considered carefully the subject

content within each theme, including the essential knowledge they expect pupils to learn and understand.

You have invested in staff training. This is starting to make a positive difference to how well staff understand the curriculum. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done to ensure that teachers develop their subject-specific knowledge. Some teachers need this additional support to teach all subjects effectively.

Plans for mathematics and English are well sequenced. Leaders know where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. When pupils returned from the periods of partial school closure, you quickly identified where gaps in pupils' understanding were. You have adapted these subjects so that gaps in knowledge are addressed. For example, teachers found that some pupils in Years 4 and 5 struggled with fractions. Teachers broke this concept down into smaller steps and went back over multiplication and division to strengthen pupils' understanding.

Leaders have introduced a structured and well-planned system for teaching reading. When pupils join the school, their phonics knowledge is assessed carefully. Pupils who fall behind are given focused teaching to support their reading. Pupils enjoy reading and discuss their favourite books and authors.

Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is improving, which in turn is leading to better support for these pupils. However, in some cases, pupils with SEND are not supported effectively to access the full curriculum and learn the same subject content as their peers. Following the COVID-19 restrictions, leaders have focused on ensuring that pupils are able to access support available from outside agencies, such as speech and language therapy, to meet their needs.

You have also been working on improving behaviour in the school. You have introduced new routines and clarified your expectations. Teachers and support staff use the same approach to deal with any poor behaviour. This means that pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils behave sensibly inside lessons and around the school.

Additional support

An executive principal has joined the school from the trust. She has been supporting you and other leaders to carry out the plans for school improvement.

The local authority has checked leaders' evaluation of the school's work. Local authority officers know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They understand the barriers that leaders face and have worked with you to overcome them.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the executive principal. I also met with other leaders, staff and pupils. Meetings were also held with a representative of the local authority and a representative of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons, listened to pupils read, spoke with staff and pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work. I looked at documents and the outcomes of leaders' monitoring activities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Partnership Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barking and Dagenham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Adam Vincent
Her Majesty's Inspector