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25 June 2022

Mr Paddy Wright
Headteacher
Dodworth St John the Baptist CofE Primary Academy
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Dear Mr Wright

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Dodworth St John the Baptist CofE Primary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 5 May 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in October 2021. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing 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:

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's action plans are fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of St Mary's Academy Trust, the director of

education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnsley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Zoe Lightfoot
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 5 May 2022

Context

Leaders in this school and across the multi-academy trust are committed to taking the action needed for effective change. The pace of this change has been slowed slightly due to increased staff absence as a result of COVID-19. However, leaders have continued to address the key areas for improvement. They have covered teacher absences with substantive members of staff wherever possible. This has maintained continuity in the approaches to behaviour and learning for pupils.

There have been some staffing changes since the last inspection in October 2021. Senior leaders in the trust spend time each week supporting senior leaders and subject leaders in school. The number of higher-level teaching assistant posts in the school has increased. This is to increase non-contact time for subject leaders so that curriculum improvements can continue at pace.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Senior leaders in school work closely with leaders from the trust. Together with external leaders, they have developed early identification processes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are working to further develop the provision for pupils in early years.

Leaders' first priority has been to improve pupils' behaviour in school and secure pupils' positive attitudes to learning. The headteacher consulted with stakeholders. This was to ensure that the expectations of parents, carers, pupils and staff became part of the process of developing the new behaviour policy. Leaders are working to achieve the United Against Bullying accreditation. This is contributing to more positive attitudes for learning in most classrooms and calmer transitions around school. Older pupils have greater focus in lessons. They understand the importance of making the right choices in order to help them to learn. While behaviour is much improved, leaders acknowledge that further work is needed. Leaders' analysis of behaviour shows that low-level disruption is much reduced. However, leaders want calm behaviours for learning to be consistent in every classroom, every day.

The action taken to improve the curriculum offer for pupils with SEND is highly effective. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) had very recently been appointed to this role at the time of the last inspection. Since this time, she has successfully undertaken the SENCo qualification. Pupils with SEND are now supported by well-structured support plans that are reviewed regularly by the SENCo and class teacher. The SENCo has delivered training and support for staff in school. Most teachers are implementing the new approach well. This has resulted in pupils with SEND better being able to access learning alongside their peers. Some staff need further bespoke support so

that the pupils in their class are able to access learning in the classroom. The SENCo has planned further targeted training and support for these staff.

Governors are well informed. They understand the actions that leaders have needed to take and the importance of getting this right. Due to the high rate of COVID-19 infections that the school has experienced, they have had little opportunity to visit school. School visits are planned to resume this term. They plan to gain a deeper understanding of actions being undertaken in school and the impact of these through these visits. The governing body will then be better placed to hold leaders to account.

Trust leaders are working closely with senior leaders in school. The trust understands the importance of their role in ensuring that the recent improvements that have been made are maintained. There is ambition that the school improves at pace.

Leaders are continuing to work to have a strong curriculum offer in all foundation subjects. This work has begun in some subjects, for example in music and history. Developing high-quality subject leadership is a priority in school. Leaders understand the need for pupils to build on their prior learning in order that they know, remember and can do more. In some subjects, opportunities to revisit learning have been planned. However, this is not the case in all subjects.

In all subjects, leaders are working to plan their curriculum from the early years through to Year 6. However, curriculum thinking does not yet show how pupils will build their learning over time. This is necessary to provide clarity for all teachers. This will enable subject leaders to develop assessment processes to check that pupils are learning what they are being taught.

Leaders continue to develop the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum for older pupils. The PSHE curriculum is now planned from the early years through to Year 6. Leaders are working with their local community to develop a stronger understanding of British values. Leaders have planned visits to places of worship and have plans for faith leaders to visit the school. Leaders have further work to develop the relationships and sex education aspects of the PSHE curriculum. Some pupils in key stage 2 say that a small number of pupils use homophobic language. They discussed how some pupils inappropriately discuss private body parts. Pupils understand that this is not acceptable behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of their own physical and mental health.

Additional support

Leaders demonstrated the challenge and support they receive from trust leaders, the diocese and the local authority (LA). The headteacher values the training opportunities that have been delivered for subject leaders. The diocese is working closely with the school, supporting the development of the early years foundation stage. This is to ensure that children get the strongest start to their education. School leaders continue to work closely with the LA to audit and embed the school's SEND offer.

Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher. I spoke with members of the governing body, staff, pupils and representatives from the LA. I met with the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO from the multi-academy trust. I visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.