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Mrs Yvonne Jones
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Dear Mrs Jones

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Hyde Park Infants' School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 7 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November 2021.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, staff, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, trustees and governors the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also scrutinised documentation, visited lessons and spoke to pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Hyde Park Infants' School remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Since the previous monitoring visit, there have been some staffing changes. Two teachers have recently joined the school, along with two teaching assistants. Links with the junior school have been strengthened. This means that subject leaders now take responsibility

across both schools. They are working more closely as a cohesive team to share best practice. Currently, there is a member of staff from another multi-academy trust adding leadership capacity within the school. This has helped to upskill leaders and maintain the momentum for improvement.

You, along with other leaders, continue to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders check with increasing precision that actions are having a positive impact on the quality of education that pupils receive.

Leaders have provided substantial training for staff in Reception. Staff have a better understanding of how the youngest children learn. There is a more consistent approach to the delivery of the curriculum. Children learn with increasing confidence and independence. They continue to show sustained engagement during independent learning and cooperate well with others. Staff are increasing their understanding of when to support learning and when to let children have a go for themselves. Staff balance noticing children's learning with asking them questions, to deepen their understanding. There are now more established routines in place to share children's achievements and plan next steps as an early years team. Curriculum designs highlight the key knowledge children need to learn, as well as the new vocabulary staff will share with them. Leaders know that, following the move to the new Reception building, they will need to give careful consideration to the organisation of the new environment. This will enable them to maximise the impact of the purposefully designed outdoor area on pupils' physical development.

Leaders have continued to develop the roles and expertise of subject leaders. A more established cycle of monitoring is in place for all subjects. Leadership roles have been further strengthened by leaders' decision to link subject leaders' responsibilities with the junior school. This has deepened subject leaders' understanding of the sequence of the curriculum, starting from Reception. Subject leaders show increasing confidence to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. They have dedicated time to visit lessons, look at samples of work and speak to staff. The feedback subject leaders give to staff is strengthening the quality of the curriculum and the impact on pupils' learning over time.

Leaders have delivered training that helps staff to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are more robust systems in place for monitoring the impact of the extra help or adaptations that pupils receive. Leaders model the monitoring process for teachers, including how to spot small steps of progress. This helps teachers to fine tune support to meet pupils' needs with increasing accuracy. Leaders make more regular checks on pupils' learning targets to make sure they are specific and measurable. They support teachers to consider the most suitable next steps for pupils and how to build their confidence and independence. Leaders are developing a more accurate overview of the provision for pupils with SEND across the school. They now work more closely with a wide range of nursery settings to plan the support children may need when they join the school in Reception.

The trust continues to provide support and challenge to senior leaders. Regular monitoring meetings provide opportunities for trust leaders to check on the school's progress. The timescales leaders set are realistic and focus on improvements being sustainable over time. Senior leaders accurately evaluate the progress towards the areas for development while taking care to consider the impact on staff well-being and workload. Staff feel positive about the many recent changes. They share their commitment to supporting leaders' vision for the further development of the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Horizon Multi-Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Dennis
His Majesty's Inspector