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Steve Summerton
Headteacher
Valentine Primary School
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Dear Mr Summerton

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Valentine Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 13 September 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 took place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and the executive headteacher, other leaders, staff, governors and the local authority 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 carried out visits to lessons, met with staff and pupils and looked at school documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- Develop staff's subject knowledge and consistency of curriculum implementation to support all pupils to learn well across the curriculum.
- Ensure that staff effectively adapt their teaching to enable all pupils to achieve well.

Main findings

Since September 2023, the school has benefited from additional leadership support. The school has joined a cluster of schools with an executive headteacher. A new governing body, including a chair of governors, started at the same time.

With the expert guidance of the executive headteacher, you and your team have started to implement rapid improvements to the quality of education. The school has introduced an ambitious curriculum since the start of term. The new curriculum is coherently sequenced and planned to support pupils to remember more over time. Teachers revisit key content to ensure that pupils' learning is secure. Careful thought has been given to how the reading curriculum supports learning. Pupils are already making links between the texts they are reading and the broader curriculum. In a short space of time, teachers have worked to put the new curriculum into practice. It is at the early stage of being implemented. More work is needed to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge and their understanding of how to follow the new planning with consistency. The school provides some adaptations for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

You have valued strong support from the executive headteacher and other schools within the cluster with the early implementation of the curriculum. You have developed coherent monitoring systems to review the effectiveness of improvements. Staff value the support from colleagues at other schools and see this as a positive change. The recently formed governing body has an accurate understanding of the improvements required. You recognise these changes are raising staff's expectations and beginning to bring about improved consistency. You have established a structured coaching programme to rapidly develop leadership in the school.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and positive. They are engaged in their learning and work with purpose and enthusiasm. Pupils and staff understand the new systems and behaviour is continuing to improve. Governors monitor this through the systems you now have in place.

You value the challenge and support from the local authority. For example, the local authority completed a safeguarding audit and you have acted swiftly to act on its findings.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the executive headteacher, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Southampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Woodbridge
His Majesty's Inspector