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Scott Fewster
Headteacher
Buswells Lodge Primary School
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Dear Mr Fewster

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Buswells Lodge Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 27 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 two 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, your acting deputy headteacher, other subject leaders, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body, 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 visited lessons, spoke with pupils and staff, looked at samples of pupils' work and scrutinised documents, including safeguarding documents. I also reviewed the school's curriculum in history and geography. 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:

- Ensure that the early years curriculum sets out the important knowledge that children will learn, and that the school monitors the implementation of the curriculum from the early years to Year six.
- Ensure that the recent changes to the curriculum do not continue to impact adversely on staff well-being and workload.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to staffing. Your deputy headteacher left the school in the summer of 2023. One of your assistant headteachers is now acting deputy headteacher. Two teachers left the school. There are three experienced teachers in the early years. This has increased the capacity to make the necessary improvements in the early years. The school now has a dedicated family support worker, based in the school office.

You are taking effective action to improve the quality of education. This includes prioritising the teaching of early reading. You have ensured that all staff are trained in the school's approach to teaching phonics. The phonics programme is being implemented consistently. You have ensured that the books pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they know.

You have prioritised developing plans in the wider curriculum. You focused on two subjects, computing and music, to initially develop and implement across the school. You then focused on the other subjects in the wider curriculum. Curriculum plans are now in place for all subject areas. You are implementing a published scheme as a base for your curriculum. You have considered the local context and needs of the pupils. You have mapped out the experiences that you want pupils to access, in order to enhance their understanding of the local area and the wider world. The curriculum sets out the precise knowledge that you want pupils to learn.

The school is working to develop the early years curriculum, so that the precise knowledge children need to learn is identified in all areas of learning. Subject leaders have started to work with early years staff to carefully map out how the whole school curriculum builds on what children learn in Nursery and Reception. You correctly identify that there is more to do to ensure that the intended curriculum is being implemented well, so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve as well as they could. You are devising a strategic approach to monitor this.

The school has high ambitions for children in the early years. You have engaged with external support to redesign the indoor and outdoor areas in the early years. The learning environments support children's learning well.

Governors are clear about their role. They have worked hard to develop a strategic approach when holding leaders to account for the quality of learning in the school. Governors understand many of the school's priorities and challenge leaders on the impact of their decisions and actions. Governors and leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being. However, there have been many changes to the curriculum. This has impacted on staff morale. You have rightly identified that there is work to do to ensure that staff do not feel overwhelmed by all of the changes in school and, instead, feel supported.

There is a consistent approach to behaviour management. The majority of pupils believe that staff deal with incidents of bullying well. Pupils know and understand the school's rules: 'Be ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.

You have worked closely with the local authority school improvement partner and external support partners and have benefited from this support.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Norbury
His Majesty's Inspector