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Emma Cameron
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Dear Mrs Cameron

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Carrington Junior School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 2 November 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 and other leaders, 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 visited lessons, met a selection of staff, spoke to pupils, watched phonics interventions and reviewed documents. 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 staff are supported to understand how to deliver the curriculum effectively, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge are reduced

- precisely define and deliver the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in all subjects, so that learning is focused on these rather than on lesson activities
- ensure that staff have sufficient expertise to deliver phonics effectively.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you have prioritised phonics for pupils who are in the early stages of reading. This is because you understand that reading will enable pupils to access the curriculum. Staff have been trained and there is now a shared approach to teaching early reading, which aligns with what is offered by the neighbouring infant school. You have ensured that pupils read books matched to the sounds they have learned. There is a genuine enthusiasm for reading among pupils. They report that they enjoy reading and are keen to talk about the books they read. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The phonics scheme is relatively new and there is still some work to be done in order to ensure that there is a consistent approach used by all staff. There is some variability in how well staff support pupils who are still learning to read. This means that not all pupils are learning to read as quickly as they could.

You have reviewed the processes and procedures around the provision for pupils with SEND. There is now an emphasis on providing quality first teaching and suitable adaptations for pupils. There are strong systems for the identification of pupils with SEND. The school has trained staff to understand how best to meet the needs of pupils with SEND within the classroom environment. Education, health and care plan targets have been broken down by the SEND team to make it easier for staff to know the strategies to use and when to use them. In classrooms, a range of adaptations are made to support pupils. This includes the use of resources, adult support, now and next boards, visual timetables and visual vocabulary. Pupils in the additional resource provision are well supported. Pupils with SEND are integrated into school life and there is a strong sense of inclusion.

You have reviewed the curriculum since the last inspection. There is now a revised curriculum model in place across the school. In mathematics, the fluency focus is not always apparent, and this impacts on pupils' ability to recall key content. Outcomes in mathematics are below the school's expectations. You are aware of this and know that pupils do have gaps as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the historic weaknesses in the curriculum. For subjects other than English and mathematics, there is still work to be done in order for pupils to recall the important information from each subject. Currently, older pupils do not always recall their learning but talk enthusiastically about the activities they completed. Even though the knowledge pupils should remember is now identified, this is not precisely taught, and teachers do not always check that pupils have understood this information.

You have introduced the 'Carrington Way', which details a shared approach that all teachers must follow in classrooms when teaching. This is not yet fully embedded across

the school. Although this identifies the non-negotiable elements, it is apparent that this is not yet having an impact on pupils' knowing more and remembering more across the curriculum. There is also variability in the implementation of this. You have put support in place so that staff understand the shared expectations and, where there are concerns, you have challenged accordingly. You feel that some members of staff are not yet fully on board with the new routines and systems but are managing this in order to prevent this being a barrier to improvement.

Leaders, including governors, have a strong understanding of the school. They understand the challenge of balancing moving standards in the school forward quickly with considering the well-being of staff. You are resolute in the importance of providing a good quality of education. Since the last inspection, there has been a governance review. As a result, governors' routines for checking the quality of provision have been adapted effectively.

You have made effective use of external support from the local authority as well as from wider partners. This has included support with the introduction of the phonics scheme. An external review of SEND has helped the school to focus on the areas for development. There has been work with local special schools and the pupil referral unit in order to support vulnerable pupils and ensure that provision can meet their needs. Clear plans are in place for the development journey of the school. All subjects have an action plan and leaders ensure oversight of this during monitoring conversations. The school development plan also details the key focus areas. This identifies the strands to develop as well as the actions and success criteria.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Staggs
His Majesty's Inspector