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Josephine Garnham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Garnham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Meadowside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- sequence clearly the knowledge that pupils need to learn in each curriculum subject

- plan when and how teachers can check if pupils know more, remember more, and can do more.

Context

The pandemic has slowed the speed of leaders' actions to improve the school. Some staff were absent for periods of time due to illness caused by COVID-19. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. In March 2021, two members of staff were appointed to lead improvements to the curriculum. These leaders are helping subject leaders to develop their curriculum planning.

Main findings

Leaders are taking appropriate action to build on the improvements made to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is high priority for the school. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading. Skilled staff teach phonics well. They check the sounds that pupils know and remember. Pupils who fall behind receive prompt and effective support.

Leaders continue to change the mathematics curriculum to better meet the needs of individual pupils. Staff training for teaching mathematics is suitably focused. The pandemic has had a negative impact on the development of pupils' writing skills. Plans to inspire pupils to write more in the future, are well thought out. Leaders have found that pupils need to practise the sounds they know when learning to spell. A new approach to spelling is planned.

After the disruption caused by the pandemic, leaders are picking up the pace of improvements to the school's curriculum. New leaders for the curriculum are enthusiastic and dedicated. They help subject leaders to plan overviews of the content pupils will learn.

The sequencing of some subjects such as Spanish, is complete. These plans show how knowledge builds as pupils make progress through school. Not all subjects are similarly planned. Improvements to the curriculum are still in the early stages. Some leaders are not clear how to show what knowledge to teach to pupils in their subject and when. Draft plans for some subjects do not identify how and when teachers should check what pupils know and remember. Without these checks, it is difficult for teachers to ensure that learning is ambitious enough and meets the needs of all pupils.

Most plans to improve the school are focused on key priorities to help leaders get back on track with improvements. Leaders have detailed plans of action in place. Actions such as those shown for reading, show a renewed sense of ambition for pupils. Leaders, including governors, are determined to drive necessary

improvements forward. Even so, plans to improve all subjects in the curriculum lack the necessary precision and tenacity to achieve effective and sustainable outcomes.

Additional support

The local authority has provided focused support to the school. It has helped the school to prioritise reading and develop a way forward to improve writing for pupils. Leaders value the advice and help the local authority provides.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, school business manager, the designated leader for safeguarding, several members of staff, including curriculum and subject leaders, pupils, the chair of the governing body and two other governors. A virtual meeting was held with two representatives of the local authority. I also visited lessons with leaders, listened to pupils read and reviewed a range of documents, including some of the school's curriculum plans. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 12 free-text responses, and 25 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector