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Dear Miss Harvey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's C of E Aided Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 8 June 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you 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 ensure that:

- teachers have had the training they need to implement the revised curriculum
- leaders check how the changes to the curriculum are improving the quality of education for pupils at the school.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to teaching staff. Many subjects in the curriculum have new subject leaders.
- The chair of governors took up their role in July 2020. Currently, the school is seeking to appoint two further governors.
- Following the previous inspection, the Diocese of Ely multi-academy trust (the trust) has appointed new specialist advisers to increase their support for school improvement.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection, leaders and the trust are quickly taking the actions needed to improve the school. Leaders have reviewed the English and mathematics curriculums. New schemes of learning have been adapted for some other subjects across the curriculum. However, work on implementing the new plans in all subjects and ensuring that teachers are trained to deliver it effectively in all subjects has been delayed by the pandemic.

Subject leaders have been involved in the development of their curriculum areas. Teachers welcome and appreciate the increased support and training that subject leaders provide. Where new curriculum plans are in place, pupils increase their subject knowledge, building on what they have learned previously. For example, in design technology, pupils are able to discuss the design process and talk knowledgeably about how they are developing a prototype. Pupils are able to confidently evaluate the design process they have gone through.

Leaders have reviewed how phonics is taught at the school. Teachers are trained to support pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in developing their early reading skills quickly. Pupils read a range of age-appropriate books to practise their phonic knowledge. Pupils are well supported in becoming fluent readers at whatever age they join the school.

Reading is a priority. Pupils read in class regularly. Leaders have carefully selected the books pupils read. For example, pupils shared how much they had enjoyed 'The River Runs Gold' and how they have linked this story to their current whole-class book. The regular opportunities to read a variety of texts is contributing towards pupils developing a love of reading.

Teachers feel supported by leaders and say that their workload is carefully managed. Leaders are continuing to provide training to ensure that teachers are prepared to implement the full curriculum in September 2021.

Leaders have begun to check how well teachers are implementing the planned, new curriculum. However, this work has only recently restarted due to the pandemic and leaders are not currently sure what difference the new curriculum has made to pupils' achievement in all subjects.

Additional support

Leaders continue to receive support from the trust. The trust's specialist advisers have provided appropriate challenge to the decisions leaders have taken to improve the curriculum across all subjects.

Leaders have sought external support when introducing and adapting new schemes of learning for curriculum subjects. Staff have received training. This has ensured that expectations for the curriculum are being put in place and that staff are being equipped to teach every subject effectively.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the trust's chief executive officer, specialist advisers, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I reviewed the school's self-evaluation plan, minutes of the governors' meetings, leaders' internal monitoring documents and other documentary evidence provided by the school. I analysed 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 34 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Ely multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Fyfe Johnston
Her Majesty's Inspector