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Damian Davey
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Dear Mr Davey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Huttoft Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 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 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.

Context

COVID-19 has affected leaders' plans to improve the curriculum. Since the previous monitoring visit, all school 'bubbles' closed at least once and three members of staff have had a period of absence due to COVID-19.

Main findings

The onset of COVID-19 so soon after the school's most recent section 5 inspection has prevented school leaders from putting in place all of their planned improvements. While progress in some areas has been slow, leaders and the governing body are bringing about improvements. They plan to act with urgency to address all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspections.

Leaders have managed well the challenging circumstances that COVID-19 has presented. Leaders and other staff have focused on making sure that pupils' learning has continued. They have considered how they will ensure pupils' well-being. Leaders and staff have reviewed how they promote positive behaviour and attitudes. Pupils behave well and enjoy learning.

Staff and pupils are positive about improvements to the overall curriculum. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning and are proud of their work. However, sometimes they are not sure how what they are learning relates to the specific subject they are studying. Subject leaders have yet to ensure that they set out the important knowledge pupils must learn and the order in which they will learn it in the different subjects.

Leaders and staff are improving how they check pupils' learning. Staff have received further training on how to do this. Leaders and the governing body have carried out some work to check the quality of the curriculum, in mathematics for example. They have found out that work is sometimes not ambitious enough and are working with staff to further improve the mathematics curriculum. The scope of leaders' work to check what pupils have learned is still at an early stage for many subjects. Leaders have yet to establish a clear understanding of how well different subjects are taught and what pupils know and remember.

Leaders and other staff make sure that reading is a high priority for the school. Some staff have undertaken online training about the school's phonics programme. New books have been purchased and staff and pupils are enthusiastic about reading. Books are matched well to the sounds pupils know and their reading ability in key stage 2. However, leaders have not checked the quality of teaching. There are still some differences in the way teachers teach phonics, for example.

The governing body understands its role to support and challenge the school to improve. Leaders and the governing body have an accurate picture of what is being achieved and what needs to be done. The school's plan for improvement is appropriate. It makes clear who is responsible for different areas and the timescales for when things will be done.

Additional support

Since the appointment of the headteacher in January 2020, the school has not received specific external support and challenge. Nonetheless, leaders value the updates and guidance for schools that the local authority provides.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, the chair of the governing body and staff to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited lessons, spoke with pupils about their work, and heard pupils read. I looked at documentation in relation to safeguarding, as well as the school's plans for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector