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Helen Simmerson
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Dear Mrs Simmerson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Emmaus Catholic and Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 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:

- sharpen the use of assessment to ensure teachers know precisely what content pupils can remember from the taught curriculum, and use this to identify more accurately the aspects of key learning that need to be revisited within lessons
- develop the school's culture of reading to ensure it has a greater impact on all pupils, especially in relation to inspiring pupils to love reading for pleasure.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection in September 2019, two newly qualified teachers have joined the school. A new chair of the governing body has been appointed following the resignation of the previous post holder. Three other governors have been appointed to the governing body.

The Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust, which the school is part of, is currently subject to a 'financial notice to improve' issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The recently appointed chief executive officer of the trust is working closely with the school to minimise the impact this has on the school.

Throughout the periods when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, you continued to teach the school's usual curriculum.

Main findings

Leaders have made progress to address the areas for improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. You have not allowed the pandemic to hold back your plans to improve the school. Alongside this work, you have sought to provide enrichment opportunities for pupils, despite the obstacles the pandemic has presented. During the week that this inspection took place, for example, a local artist was in school working with pupils of all ages. Pupils spoke positively about the experiences on offer at this school.

Subject leaders have rewritten their curriculum plans. The plans of the subjects I reviewed now meet the requirements of the national curriculum. They show ambition for all pupils, setting out the knowledge and skills pupils should cover in all year groups. Across all subjects, 'content organisers', short documents which focus on the key content to be taught, have been introduced to help teachers with their lesson planning.

Curriculum plans are designed to allow pupils to build on their prior learning. In textiles, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 now learn how to combine fabrics of different shape and size. This builds on what they have been taught previously about methods of joining pieces of fabric together. Pupils in Year 4 were able to

explain to me how all these skills were used when they recently designed and made fabric purses.

You have also created opportunities for pupils to study the local area within your subject plans. In history, for example, pupils now learn about what life in the local area of Wybourn was like in the past. They are also taught about the role that the city of Sheffield had in the Industrial Revolution, and the links between the Sheffield Manor Lodge and the Tudor period. Pupils are benefiting from these opportunities. They spoke to me with confidence and pride about what they have remembered from these topics.

Pupils are not always provided with opportunities to revisit topics taught previously. Plans to assess what pupils have remembered from the new curriculum are also less developed. Addressing this is important. This will strengthen your vision to ensure pupils remember more of what they have been taught. Subject leaders know that this is the appropriate next step in developing the curriculum at your school.

Improvements have been made to the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is highly knowledgeable about the needs of pupils who require additional support. Appropriate support is put in place for these pupils to allow them to fully engage in all aspects of school life. This includes, where necessary, work with external agencies. The responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey showed that parents and carers were grateful for the support put in place for children with SEND.

A phonics scheme of work is embedded across school. Support staff are fully trained in supporting those who require additional help to read. This support is also given to older pupils where they are not yet confident readers. The books pupils read in school closely match the sounds they have learned. Further attention now needs to be paid to encouraging all pupils to read for pleasure and develop a love of reading. It is important to ensure the impact of reading strategies benefits all pupils.

There have been improvements to accountability at all levels of leadership. The skillset of the local governing body has been strengthened through the appointment of additional governors. Members of the governing body work closely with you and other leaders. They undertake their own quality assurance activities and report back on what they have found. There is a tenacious approach to ensuring that any issues identified are dealt with swiftly.

Your subject leaders told me that their own levels of accountability have increased. They undertake regular 'subject reviews' to check that their subject plans are being delivered by all teachers. Subject leaders are more confident in challenging colleagues where they have identified concerns. They must now ensure any recommendations they make are followed up. This will ensure pupils benefit from the work subject leaders are doing.

You have worked hard to take your staff with you on this school improvement journey. They are implementing the changes you have initiated. Thirty-six members of staff completed a survey as part of this inspection. They all expressed their pride in working at the school. They all also considered it to be well led.

Additional support

The chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust is supporting you to strengthen your plans for further school improvement. He is challenging you and other leaders to ensure that improvements are taking place at an appropriate pace. You are in the process of adding precise timescales to your school improvement plans and ensuring the allocation of responsibilities is clear. You spoke positively of the support you are now receiving from the trust.

A school improvement partner from 'Learn Sheffield' is supporting you to expand the ambition of your curriculum. You have also engaged with the local 'English hub' to strengthen your plans in this subject. You regularly network with leaders from other schools in Sheffield to aid your ambition to improve this school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, the SENCo, your curriculum leader, and a number of subject leaders. I also met with the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust and a school improvement officer from Learn Sheffield. We discussed the actions taken to improve the school since the last inspection.

I visited lessons, including those in the early years, to help understand how pupils with SEND are supported in the school. I listened to pupils reading to adults in school and looked at a sample of pupils' work. I also spoke to pupils to discuss their experiences of learning in school. I considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 36 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Hallam, the director of education for the Diocese of Sheffield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

James Duncan
Her Majesty's Inspector

