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Daisy Bailey
Headteacher
Manor Field Primary School
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Dear Ms Bailey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Manor Field Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 2020, 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 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.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the well-considered planning in the foundation subjects is consistently implemented across all classes
- continue to develop the skills and expertise of foundation subject leaders so that any actions for improvement can be swiftly identified and acted upon.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leaders. I met with the English, mathematics and geography subject leaders. I met with three governors including the chair of governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone meeting to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Together with the assistant headteacher we visited Years 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 to observe

learning, talk to pupils in lessons and review work in pupils' workbooks. I spoke to 10 pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 about their views of the school. I observed six pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to an adult. I spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and their work in monitoring the school. I examined the school's single central record of background checks on adults working in the school.

Context

Several changes have taken place since the section 5 inspection. The acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were made substantive in their posts from September 2018. You have undertaken a restructure of support staff. You have employed specialist teachers of French, music and dance. A new school business manager was appointed in July 2019. A full-time special educational needs coordinator was appointed in November 2019. A new premises manager was appointed in September 2019. Two new governors have joined the governing body. From September 2019 you have stopped mixed-age classes. There are now three classes in each year group, other than in Years 1 and 6, where there are two classes.

Main findings

Ably supported by the governors, deputy and assistant headteacher you are effectively making the required improvements. You have sensibly put in place a staffing structure that has the quality of education at its heart. Staff and governors share your determination to improve the school. You are ambitious that pupils do well and receive a broad and interesting curriculum. Nothing has been left to chance. Plans for improvement are carefully considered and you have chosen to put in place helpful targets throughout the year to achieve success. You and your leadership team are reflective and measured, ensuring that initiatives are firmly in place before moving on to improve other aspects of the school's work. You are investing in extensive professional development for staff so that they are well supported in their work. Staff are being held to account for the work that they do.

Your approach to improving behaviour across the school is proving transformative. Incidents of poor behaviour have dropped significantly over the last three years. Everyone now understands the rules, and staff support pupils well to help them thrive, whatever their difficulties may be. Classrooms are calm and attractive environments where pupils can focus on their learning.

You are skilfully drawing on expertise within the school, and externally, to strengthen the quality of education. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics.

The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school. You are ensuring that teachers' mathematical knowledge is being strengthened. You are using a clear and consistent approach across the school to the teaching of mathematics. Your focus on developing pupils' fluency in mathematics is paying off. Pupils' misconceptions are being picked up quickly. Pupils are being given regular opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve challenging problems. Work seen in books shows many examples of pupils explaining their reasoning. Pupils are greatly enjoying their mathematics lessons and the challenges they are set.

In English, pupils are writing extensively. Teachers actively look for opportunities for pupils to extend their writing in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, pupils wrote at length about what it was like during the Second World War and about a visit to a local farm. They are given opportunities to write freely in their 'ink waster books'. You are considering how this area of the school's work can be further strengthened through immersing pupils more fully in the wide variety of texts offered and by bringing a greater consistency across the classes.

You are carefully considering your curriculum and are putting in place well-considered plans for each subject area. You have decided to link these to topics that interest your pupils. Your plans show that you are considering what knowledge and skills should be taught and the sequence in which this should be done. However, in the foundation subjects this is not consistently implemented across all classes yet. You recognise the role that subject leaders play in ensuring that this is securely embedded. You are sensibly providing training and support, so these leaders can be more effective in their roles.

Leaders are successfully prioritising reading. Classrooms include an inviting reading area and each year group has suggested books for pupils to read before they move up the school. Pupils are getting off to a good start with their reading in the younger years, with daily phonics sessions. Support staff are working with great care to help pupils who have been identified as needing support to catch up with their reading. Books that pupils read are being well matched to their phonics knowledge. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have remained high and above the national average for the past three years.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They are enjoying school and the many opportunities they are given, such as taking part in a wide range of sporting and musical events. They are relishing their responsibilities such as being head boy or girl, part of the 'communication team' or looking after younger pupils on the playground.

External support

The local authority is providing effective support and challenge to leaders and governors to improve the school. Advisers from West Sussex local authority are offering timely, focused support and guidance in all aspects of the school's work,

including finance and curriculum development. Staff training, together with the school's involvement in specific local authority and partnership 'hub' projects, is helping to improve the quality of education in the school. Firm plans are in place for a national leader of education to begin providing further support with leadership development.

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

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation
Her Majesty's Inspector