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Jennifer Ashworth
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Dear Ms Ashworth

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Eden 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 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:

- develop leaders' use of assessment information so that they can check whether pupils are knowing and remembering more over time.

Context

Eden School is a specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The chair of governors retired in December 2019 and a new chair was elected in January 2020.

Main findings

You and other leaders have maintained a clear focus on improving the school, despite the impact of the pandemic. Your expectations for pupils' behaviour remain high and much work has been completed to develop a stronger curriculum. You have raised the expectations of staff. All staff who responded to an online survey agreed that the school is a lot better than it was in 2019. The school is well placed for continued improvement.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to support subject leaders to develop effective curriculum plans in all subjects. This was to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know and can do. You have been successful in addressing this area in many subjects, but most notably in English, mathematics, science and personal, health, social and economic education. Leaders in these subjects are supporting others to improve. Plans have been designed in a broader range of subjects than at the last inspection. Leaders have mapped out the key skills and knowledge that they want pupils to acquire and in what order.

Staff are developing a better understanding of how to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding in some subjects. Supported by subject leaders, they are beginning to use assessment information to check pupils' learning and to inform future planning. Consequently, leaders are gaining a greater understanding of the basic knowledge pupils are gaining in these subjects. This allows staff to build in opportunities for pupils to practise what they already know before they learn new content. For example, pupils in Year 10 told me that they use their prior knowledge of multiplication to work out complex problems involving algebra. However, in some subjects, leaders' use of assessment is at a very early stage of development. In these subjects, leaders are not clear if pupils know more and remember more over time.

You have developed the curriculum to allow pupils to gain a greater insight into the major religions, ethnicities and other key groups that make up British society. For example, pupils are increasing their understanding of how people are different. They know that they should treat everyone with dignity, respect and tolerance. The curriculum is enabling pupils to explore and learn about different cultures. Pupils talked to me about their work on diversity, including work on equalities. Their knowledge about different faiths, for example Islam, is also improving. However,

some planned trips to local places of worship have been disrupted by the pandemic. You plan to resume these when appropriate.

Across the curriculum, teachers promote a love of reading. Pupils read, or are read to, each day. You have changed the reading curriculum and new strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' reading fluency. Phonics is now planned in a logical sequence, including for those who are emerging readers. Books are matched to the sounds that pupils have been learning. The pupils that I spoke to feel challenged through their reading. They value the wide variety of books that they have access to, including in the new school library. Older pupils particularly enjoyed the recent work on 'Romeo and Juliet'.

Governors, the trust and senior leaders know the strengths of the school. They are taking extensive action to remedy the remaining weaknesses. Governors are clear on what is expected of them. They use the effective school development plan to guide their work. Minutes of governing body meetings show that you provide detailed information. Governors challenge this information to assure themselves of the impact of actions taken. In this way, the governing body evaluates decisions that senior leaders take and checks that the curriculum is improving.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They particularly appreciate the time given to discuss subjects at the end of the school week. This is contributing to the improvements being made to the curriculum.

Additional support

You have used the support from the trust well to aid your improvement journey. For example, subject leaders have benefited from partnership work with other leaders in the trust. You are now being more selective about the support on offer. For example, you are matching future staff training to the school's most pressing priorities in the school improvement plan.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust, pupils, staff and two representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I also reviewed the school self-evaluation document, the school development plan, minutes from meetings of the governing body and curriculum plans. I considered 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 20 responses to the staff survey form.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Education Partnership Trust, the regional schools commissioner and

the director of children's services for Blackburn with Darwen. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector