

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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Gillian Talbot  
Headteacher  
Abram Bryn Gates Primary School  
Lily Lane  
Bamfurlong  
Wigan  
Lancashire  
WN2 5JT

Dear Mrs Talbot

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Abram Bryn Gates Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Paul Tomkow, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 27 and 28 January 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require improvement.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 2020.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that reading books match the reading abilities of older pupils who are still at an early stage in reading.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, there have been no changes in senior leadership or governance.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately half of the pupils were educated remotely for a short period of time. This included all pupils in Year 3, as well as individual pupils in other year groups.
- At the time of the inspection, around half of all pupils were being educated at home. Almost all of the school's vulnerable pupils were attending on site. Approximately half of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were being educated in school.
- Leaders were not dealing with any significant staffing issues at the time of the inspection. A small proportion of staff were absent due to COVID-19.

### **Main findings**

- When the school partially closed in March 2020, you were in the process of implementing a new curriculum. You continue to make this a priority. You ensure that teachers are providing all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, with an effective education.
- Subject leaders have carefully improved curriculum plans. Across different subjects, teachers identify precisely what important knowledge they want pupils to learn. Staff make sure that pupils revisit the curriculum to help them remember important facts. You have put in place detailed checks on pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Systems to check how well pupils are learning in other subjects are still developing.
- The teaching of reading is a priority for you and the staff. Staff make sure that pupils, including vulnerable pupils, learn phonics daily. This is true for pupils who work in school and those who are learning at home. Since September 2020, teachers have increased the time they spend sharing books and stories with their classes. This enables pupils to enjoy a wide range of texts. Staff provide appropriate, regular support for pupils who fall behind in their early reading. This helps pupils to get back on track swiftly. For younger pupils, teachers ensure that reading books match pupils' reading abilities. This is not always the case for those older pupils who are still at an early stage of learning to read.

- You have faced challenges in ensuring that all pupils who are expected to work remotely access daily teaching. This includes some vulnerable pupils. To remedy this, you shared your expectations with parents and carers. Most pupils are now engaging well with the remote learning that teachers are providing, but the proportion is still low in some year groups. You have taken action to improve this situation. For example, you make sure teachers share online learning more effectively with the pupils who are working at home.
- You have made the necessary changes to some subjects for pupils working remotely. For example, in physical education pupils access an online teaching programme. By taking such steps you successfully ensure that all pupils are able to access the usual breadth of subjects.
- Staff know families well. Through phone calls and visits, staff check on pupils' well-being.
- Governors check what action you and other leaders are taking to provide education during the restrictions. Governors have not been able to make their usual on-site visits. However, they provide support and challenge as you and other leaders implement the revised curriculum. Additionally, the chair of governors monitors the work of the school via weekly phone calls. She also checks on safeguarding and staff well-being. Governors have helped you with important decisions about improving learning for vulnerable pupils, such as providing families with laptops.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has received recent training from the local authority. Together with coaching from an experienced SENCo, this has increased her knowledge and skills. She knowledgeably plans a range of additional support, which is provided to pupils in school and at home. She checks that this support matches pupils' particular needs. Throughout the current restrictions, the SENCo continues to work closely with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists. This has ensured that pupils with SEND get the support and help that they need.
- The local authority provides a good range of challenge and support. This ensured that the school's new curriculum plans developed. You work with a national leader of education from another school. She has helped you to put systems in place to review the progress that you are making to improve the school.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and science, the school's SENCo, pupils and staff. They also met with representatives of those responsible for governance, and a representative of the local authority. In these

meetings, inspectors discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work, 'visited' a reading lesson and observed pupils reading with an adult. Inspectors checked 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**