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Polly Matthews
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Dear Mrs Matthews

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Court Fields School

Following my remote inspection with Lydia Pride, 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. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 2019.

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.

Context

- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes to the senior leadership team. The trust seconded the current acting headteacher in April 2019. A new deputy headteacher was appointed at the same time. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed.
- Approximately, a quarter of pupils had to be educated remotely in the autumn term 2020. The Year 8 'bubble' was isolated on two occasions. All other isolations were for individual pupils or very small groups.
- About nine tenths of pupils are currently being educated at home. About half the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and vulnerable pupils are currently learning on site.

Main findings

- Under your determined and consultative leadership, staff have diligently worked together to provide an education for pupils in the current circumstances. Pupils are increasingly benefiting from improved approaches to remote learning or tailored teaching when on site.
- You have sharpened your understanding of the school's priorities, with the support of governors and other leaders. You have created greater pride in the school amongst staff and the wider community. By prioritising staff well-being and providing useful professional development, staff feel more empowered. Most parents believe their children's learning is improving.
- Since the last inspection, your leadership team has appropriately focused on securing greater consistency in teaching. You have successfully used these improvements to develop and deliver current provision.
- Your work to strengthen remote learning is paying dividends. Lessons learned following the first national lockdown have been utilised well. Consequently, you are working with the trust to develop a more tailored remote learning package for pupils. Pupils say how much they like the improvements the school has made.
- You and other leaders have only recently started to review the quality of the curriculum. You have made useful appointments to subject leadership roles. Leaders have an improved understanding of how subject content should be selected. However, the way teachers sequence content and assess pupils' knowledge is now a priority. This is so that pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum.
- You have developed a well-considered offer for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. You are supporting some pupils to have a blend of learning in

school and from home. Where this is the case, pupils state they appreciate the flexibility that is being offered. You expect to complete the delivery of the full curriculum for Year 11 pupils before they leave. You are keen to ensure they are as well prepared for the next stage in their education as possible.

- You have appropriate plans to ensure that pupils with SEND have access to learning that meets their needs. All pupils with SEND have a named member of staff who advocates for and makes regular contact with them. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has implemented clearer systems and processes to support teachers to successfully meet pupils' needs. For example, the simplification of 'pupil passports' gives teachers clear guidance about what they should consider when planning work for pupils with SEND.
- Your local governing body is increasingly effective. They have more secure knowledge of the challenges leaders face. Governors are using searching questions to check the impact of the provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Consequently, there is greater synergy between the vision of governors and the impact of leaders' actions.
- Trust leaders share your high expectations for pupils' education and welfare. They are working with school leaders to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are well served. You have used their support and challenge to reflect on and improve provision, particularly in improving the consistency of teaching.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, three members of the local governing board and the chief executive officer from the trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also met with a selection of subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinators from the school and trust, some pupils and members of staff. We sampled examples of recorded live lessons, scrutinised examples of pupils' work, reviewed the views of parents through Parent View, sampled the outcomes of two staff surveys carried out by leaders and reviewed minutes of the governing body.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Castle Partnership multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Her Majesty's Inspector