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15 February 2021

Daniel Steel  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Steel

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The King John School**

Following my remote inspection Andrew Hemmings, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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

- You joined as headteacher in January 2021. A deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2020. Another deputy headteacher from the Zenith Multi-Academy Trust (the trust) has been working in the school since April 2020. Several senior leaders have changed responsibilities since the last monitoring inspection.
- In the autumn term 2020, all pupils in each year group received education remotely at least once. Years 7, 8 and 9 did so twice. Significant numbers of pupils in other year groups had to isolate on other occasions. Year 13 students received education remotely for seven weeks.
- During this inspection, about 95% of pupils were being educated at home. Approximately 10% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were attending on site. Leaders have identified the most vulnerable pupils and ensured that they are accessing education on the school site.
- Only a few staff were absent due to COVID-19 during this inspection. Senior leaders were covering for absent staff.

## Main findings

- Leaders are determined for all pupils to receive a broad education despite the challenges caused by COVID-19. You ensure that education is available to all pupils either on site or remotely.
- During 2019/20 leaders reviewed the school's curriculum. All pupils now study the full range of national curriculum subjects, religious education and drama until the end of Year 9.
- Subject leaders have revised their curriculum plans to identify the most important things pupils should know and the order in which these should be taught. In the autumn term, leaders' checks on the implementation of these plans were hindered by staff and pupil absence due to COVID-19. You are now carrying out these checks as planned. You identify where subject leaders need to refine plans or support teachers.
- Leaders have used what they have learned since March 2020 to develop how they provide education remotely. You have chosen to use live online lessons. These lessons are similar to those that pupils would normally experience in school. You seek the views of pupils, parents and teachers on the work of the school. You use this information to further adapt the education that you provide.

- Teachers have changed the order in which they teach some areas of the curriculum to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the content being taught. In subjects such as English and modern foreign languages, teachers spend longer on some topics than they normally would, to ensure that pupils have sufficient knowledge to move on to more complex content. You are finding alternative resources to give pupils opportunities to read, for example through electronic texts. You ensure that pupils who usually get extra help with their reading continue to do so, either online or in school.
- Leaders have trained staff in using technology to teach online. Staff appreciate this support and the opportunities they are given to share ideas. Inspectors saw the impact of this work in how some teachers have found new ways of checking pupils' understanding. You are working with teachers to develop ways of checking that pupils are attentive when completing work remotely. This is an area that is not yet fully developed.
- Vulnerable pupils and others attending school on site experience the same curriculum as pupils working at home. Staff members' regular checks on pupils' attendance, welfare and learning ensure that any pupil who needs a place on site can have one. You have made sure pupils have what they need to take part in remote education. Pupils are positive about the teaching they receive. Pupils in Years 11 and 13 continue to study and be assessed in their examination subjects. Pupils receive, online, the guidance and support they need to prepare them for the next steps in their education, training or employment.
- The special educational needs coordinator has continued to identify and assess pupils' needs and review support plans so that pupils get appropriate support. Learning support assistants (LSAs) continue to work with pupils both remotely and in school. LSAs receive the same training as teachers in the use of technology for remote teaching. Consequently, teachers and LSAs provide individual support for pupils' learning.
- Trustees and the local advisory group (LAG) hold leaders to account for the education provided. They ensure you gather information to evaluate the quality of education provided in order to inform any changes that are needed. The trustees and the LAG also check that you secure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff at this time.
- The deputy headteacher from the trust and external reviews of the leaders' work have helped to develop the curriculum. The trust's information technology team has provided software, training and technological support. This has been instrumental in helping you provide education in the current circumstances.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the Zenith Multi Academy Trust, 14 pupils who were attending on site, five members of teaching staff and representatives from the trust board and the local advisory group, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We reviewed a sample of curriculum plans from different subjects and some recorded remote learning sessions, and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. We considered 62 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. We also analysed responses to the school's own surveys of parents and staff. We reviewed minutes of meetings of the LAG and a report of an external review of the school's curriculum. We also considered correspondence sent to Ofsted and the school regarding the school's provision of education remotely.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Zenith Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**