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17 February 2021

Simon Flint  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Flint

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Newlands Community Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Christine Watkins, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 February 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 July 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.**

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

- ensure curriculum plans are carefully sequenced so that they show what pupils need to know, and when, in each subject
- improve curriculum leadership, so that it is consistently strong in all subjects.

### **Context**

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the governing body. The current chair of governors was appointed by the local authority in May 2020. The assistant headteacher is new to the role.
- A small number of pupils had to learn at home during the autumn term 2020, including one 'bubble' of Year 5 pupils.
- Currently, the majority of pupils are learning at home. Approximately half of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the majority of vulnerable pupils are attending on site.
- Currently, a small proportion of staff are absent due to COVID-19.

### **Main findings**

- Before the pandemic started, leaders had begun to develop a new curriculum. COVID-19 has delayed this process. Over recent months, leaders have ensured that the curriculum is delivered remotely as well as in school. All pupils continue to receive education in the current circumstances.
- Teachers publish a weekly timetable for pupils learning at home. This includes daily reading, writing, mathematics, physical education and a range of other subjects. Leaders provide support for pupils' mental health and well-being. They have also created systems to support families that may need help with remote learning.
- In some subjects like art and music, leaders have adapted the curriculum so that pupils at home can learn the same content as those pupils who are in school. Content in some subjects has been reordered, to be taught later in the year. In recorded lessons, staff provide clear instructions and model expectations. Teachers check pupils' learning and provide feedback to help them improve.
- Curriculum leaders are continuing to develop their subject plans. However, this work is not consistent across all subjects. Some subject plans do not set out in enough detail the knowledge that pupils need to gain. They do not show how teachers will check what knowledge pupils have remembered.

- Some subject leaders are in the early stages of developing expertise in a curriculum area. In some subjects, such as music, leadership is strong. In other subjects, leaders do not yet have sufficient understanding of and knowledge about subject leadership.
- Leaders have prioritised providing education for vulnerable pupils. This includes the offer of electronic devices where needed. Leaders have also provided packs of equipment to support pupils' learning at home. For example, pupils in the early years are provided with scissors, paper and modelling clay. Staff keep in regular contact with families to make sure they are safe and well.
- Leaders have identified reading as a priority across the school. All pupils in the early stages of reading receive daily phonics teaching. Pupils at home follow the same programme as those in school, through pre-recorded videos. Some pupils receive extra help with phonics in small groups. Pupils learning at home have access to electronic books. In all year groups, teachers continue to promote a love of books by sharing videos of themselves reading aloud.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works alongside other leaders to ensure that pupils with SEND receive an education matched to their needs.
- Some members of the governing body are new to the role. Governors are ambitious for all pupils. They have made checks on teacher workload and well-being. Governors recognise the school's strengths and provide challenge for leaders.
- The local authority provides substantial support for the school and leaders at all levels. For example, curriculum leaders have received training on developing a knowledge-based curriculum. Further significant support is planned to ensure that the school continues to improve.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, the SENCo, curriculum leaders, teachers and a group of pupils. We observed pupils in school reading to a familiar adult. We also met with a group of governors and representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We reviewed minutes of governing body meetings, examined curriculum plans, looked at samples of pupils' work and viewed samples of lessons being delivered remotely. We also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the staff survey.

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

Yours sincerely

Shaheen Hussain  
**Seconded inspector of schools**