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16 February 2021

Gareth Thomas
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mr Thomas

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hawksmoor School

Following my remote inspection with Alison Colenso, 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.

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

- ensure that the phonics programme in the Reception Year is delivered consistently, particularly for children who are learning at home, so that all children have regular opportunities to learn and practise phonics that match their individual abilities.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, two co-executive headteachers and one of the deputy headteachers have left the school. You joined the school as interim headteacher in January 2020. One governor resigned and two new governors have been appointed.
- During the autumn term, approximately one fifth of pupils had to work from home at some point. This included all children in Reception as well as individual pupils in other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was only open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. Currently, around 15% of pupils are being educated on site, while the remainder receive remote education. Over half of all vulnerable pupils are being educated in school. Approximately one in three pupils with education, health and care plans are in school.
- Currently, around 15% of staff are absent due to COVID-19. Leaders are managing to cover these duties with other staff.

Main findings

- Leaders developed the current curriculum during the spring and summer terms in 2020. Leaders are clear about what they want pupils to know in each subject. They ensure that pupils learn new concepts in a sensible order. Parents and carers and staff feel that pupils are much more enthusiastic about their learning as a result of the new curriculum.
- Leaders are ensuring that all pupils receive education in the current circumstances. Teachers make sure that what pupils learn at home mirrors what their peers are learning in school. They adjust some of the activities so that these can be carried out more easily at home. Leaders check that any adjustments to the curriculum do not interrupt the order in which pupils need to learn new concepts.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use the online learning platform to set pupils work. They use it to provide individual pupils with extra help when they need it. Teachers stagger live lessons each day in Years 1 to 6. This helps families with two or more children and only one laptop.
- Teachers continue to follow the school's mathematics programme. Some aspects, such as fractions, are harder for some pupils to learn at home. Leaders have adjusted the curriculum to make this work.

- Leaders have improved reading throughout the school. Staff have received training, including in phonics. The new approaches, such as 'whole-class reading sessions', are beginning to embed, particularly in Years 2 to 6. Pupils spoke in detail about their current class texts. Teachers adapt reading lessons so that pupils learn the same content in school or at home. However, the phonics programme for children in Reception needs to be adapted further. This is particularly the case when children are learning at home. Staff do not provide regular, well-planned opportunities through remote education that match children's abilities.
- Leaders have ensured consistency for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers who are in school. Lessons continue as normal and pupils learn alongside their peers. Teachers provide the pupils in school with extra, targeted support in reading and mathematics. This is particularly helpful to those who have fallen behind. Leaders' work with parents has led to increased numbers of vulnerable pupils attending. Staff provide parents with the things pupils need to learn at home. For example, teachers send stationery and art materials home in advance of lessons. Leaders have provided laptops and data devices to families that need them.
- The special educational needs coordinator has worked with subject leaders to make sure the new curriculum is inclusive and challenging for all. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support to meet their individual targets. Interventions, such as speech and language therapy, continue to take place, including when pupils are learning at home. Pupils who have autism spectrum disorder are benefiting from being in school at this time. This continuity in routine has been vital in maintaining these pupils' language and communication skills.
- Over the past year, governors have received training and improved their skills. New governors have helped to raise the level of challenge to senior leaders. Through visits and meetings with leaders, governors check that all pupils are receiving education in the current circumstances. In meetings, governors ask leaders about staff well-being and how staff are managing during these difficult times.
- Governors challenge leaders on the provision for vulnerable pupils. They check how the catch-up funding is used and hold leaders to account for the support given to pupils with SEND.
- The local authority has provided support and training to governors. This has improved governors' ability to challenge leaders. The school has benefited from the local authority's support in developing the curriculum and strengthening the skills of subject leaders.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, governors and representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

Inspectors also spoke with pupils and heard pupils read. Inspectors looked at the school's online learning platform with teachers and reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors met with groups of teachers and teaching assistants. Inspectors spoke with parents and reviewed a range of documentation related to the curriculum and remote education.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Rawlings
Her Majesty's Inspector