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Lisa Bracken
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bracken

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hatherden Church of England Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Sue Cox, 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 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:

- identify what pupils will learn and when in each subject, so that their knowledge develops securely and sufficiently by the end of Year 6
- increase governors' knowledge and scrutiny of the school's curriculum, so that they can challenge leaders more effectively about the quality of education that pupils are receiving.

Context

- Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has fallen. Pupils are now taught in two classes.
- One teacher joined the school in April 2020 and has led mathematics since January 2021. The other teacher is also the literacy lead. They joined the school in November 2020 as temporary maternity leave cover. All other teachers have left the school.
- Four governors have left and a new chair of governors was appointed in July 2020.
- The school closed for two weeks in October 2020 following an outbreak of COVID-19. Otherwise, very few pupils worked from home during the autumn term 2020.
- Approximately half of pupils are currently attending school. This includes three quarters of those considered vulnerable, and a fifth of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was self-isolating at home.

Main findings

- Leaders are making sensible use of staff resources to support pupils' learning at the present time. Whether at school or at home, pupils experience a similar curriculum, based on the broad range of national curriculum subjects. Where necessary, leaders have found practical solutions to providing pupils with the resources they may need to work at home.
- Before the start of the pandemic, leaders had taken some steps to strengthen the quality of the curriculum in English and mathematics. However, changes of leadership in these subjects and work to manage the impact of the pandemic have slowed the pace of improvement.
- The new English and mathematics leaders are taking appropriate steps to review and adapt subject improvement plans, based on what pupils know and

can do. The local authority is providing ongoing and helpful support to develop leadership in these subjects.

- Leaders know that pupils need to get better at reading, so that they can access the rest of the curriculum. Younger pupils receive daily phonics teaching that builds on the letters and sounds that they already know. Staff make sure that pupils can access appropriate books to help them practise reading at home. Pupils who need to catch up in reading receive effective support from their teachers.
- Work to develop the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics remains at an early stage. Leaders have done some initial work to identify how pupils' skills develop throughout their time at the school. The school's current curriculum plans are less clear about the knowledge that pupils need to gain, and in what order, in their different subjects.
- Leaders have given careful thought to identifying potentially vulnerable pupils. They have included those whose education is particularly at risk of stalling. Most of the pupils identified as vulnerable are coming to school each day. If working from home, suitable arrangements ensure that they still receive ongoing input, support and feedback about their work from their teacher.
- Staff understand the needs of pupils with SEND. Whether learning at home or at school, the support which staff provide for these pupils and their families helps them to access learning in a meaningful way. Where relevant, leaders are keeping pupils' education, health and care plans under close review, with relevant support from beyond the school.
- Governors have taken useful steps to strengthen their work. They have sensibly prioritised their work around safeguarding and staffing. Currently, their work to understand and challenge school leaders about the quality of the curriculum is in the early stages.
- The school continues to receive extensive external support from the local authority and a local teaching school. This is helping to keep leaders focused on the right things. The impact of this work has been impeded by ongoing changes in the school's structure and leadership, as well as the challenges of providing education during the pandemic.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and leaders of literacy and mathematics, and with representatives of the governing body, local authority and diocese to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

Inspectors also spoke to some children who were in school, and listened to some reading with their teacher. Inspectors looked at relevant documents shared by

leaders, and some that were available on the school website. One inspector spoke to two parents on the telephone.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector