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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Simon Robertson
Executive Headteacher
Broadlands Primary School
Broadlands Lane
Hereford
Herefordshire
HR1 1HY

Dear Mr Robertson

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Broadlands Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Mark Howes, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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 your most recent monitoring inspection, two governors have left, and three new governors have joined the governing body.
- In the autumn term 2020, almost half of pupils spent some time being educated remotely because of COVID-19 related issues. However, for most pupils, this was only for a very short period.
- The school was only open to vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers at the time of the inspection. Just under three quarters of pupils were learning remotely and the remainder were attending school. Almost all vulnerable pupils were attending school at the time of the inspection.
- Two members of support staff were absent from school at the time of the inspection. These absences were related to COVID-19. Leaders have been able to cover these absences internally.

Main findings

- School leaders have introduced new curriculum plans in science and the foundation subjects. Leaders aim to create a curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time. Subject leaders have completed training to support them in the monitoring and development of their curriculum areas. Currently, however, subject leaders are in the early stages of doing this. This is because COVID-19 restrictions have delayed their plans.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the best way to deliver their remote education package. Leaders are making sure that pupils working from home and in school receive a suitable education. They consulted with staff and parents and took their views on board. Teachers upload daily recorded lessons and relevant tasks to an online learning platform. Recorded lessons allow pupils to work at their own pace and at a time that suits their family circumstances. Teachers provide helpful feedback through an online portal. Pupils in school access the same learning as pupils who are learning at home. Leaders check the quality of the remote learning offer on a weekly basis and provide feedback to teachers. Leaders and staff rightly pride themselves on the efforts they are making to engage pupils in their learning. Teachers have reordered some areas of the remote learning curriculum because they would prefer to teach some lessons face to face. In subjects such as science and art, teachers have had to make changes because pupils do not have the required practical resources while learning at home.
- Staff maintain contact with pupils through the online portal. Weekly calls are timetabled. Staff use these means of communication to help pupils with their learning and any other issues. Staff contact pupils and their families on a more regular basis or complete home visits if required. Electronic devices have been loaned to families who need them.

- In the Reception and Year 1 classes, pupils in school and those at home continue to improve their reading skills through their daily phonics lessons. Older pupils, who are at the early stages of reading, are given access to phonics resources. Pupils who are in school can swap their reading books in the same way as they did before. Pupils who are learning at home are given access to online books. Leaders say they have checked that reading books are matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. The reading leader is planning to purchase additional reading books with this in mind.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have full access to the remote education offer. Leaders say that teachers make reasonable adjustments to the curriculum to meet the needs of this group of pupils. Some parents of pupils with SEND informed teachers that they were finding the quantity of work in the remote learning offer a challenge. Teachers provided these families with extra support and guided them to focus on specific aspects of the curriculum, such as phonics.
- Governors are proud of how quickly staff and pupils have adapted to the new way of learning. The governing body continues to monitor the work of leaders, but they are now doing this remotely. They provide appropriate challenge and support. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's remote education offer. Governors are prioritising the well-being of leaders and staff. They are mindful of putting too much pressure on them at this time.
- The school is part of a federation of three schools. The federation supports the school by completing a range of tasks, such as updating relevant policies and documents. This helps to reduce leaders' and staff's workload. Before the partial closure of schools, curriculum leaders worked collaboratively across the federation. These links are being maintained and mutual support is offered when required. Staff say that the pandemic has brought the schools within the federation closer together.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the head of learning, and a range of curriculum leaders, pupils and staff. Inspectors also spoke with four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during the national lockdown.

Inspectors also looked at a range of lessons and activities in the remote education offer.

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

Yours sincerely

Wayne Simner
Her Majesty's Inspector