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Dear Ms Wright

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Field End Junior School

Following my remote inspection with Andrea Bedeau, 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 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 April 2018.

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 the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the governing body. The local authority undertook a review of governance in October 2019. The chair of governors and other members of the governing body resigned. A new chair and vice-chair of governors were appointed in January 2020.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately 20% of pupils had to be educated remotely.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 90% of pupils were being educated at home. A small proportion of vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, leaders did not have to manage significant staff absence.

Main findings

- The leadership team is determined that all pupils learn a broad curriculum during national restrictions. You have ensured that all pupils study similar subjects and knowledge, whether they are learning at school or at home. Staff check which pupils access remote education, including those pupils who are vulnerable. They work closely with families to overcome difficulties that their children might have completing work.
- In light of national restrictions, leaders have made well-considered changes to the teaching of writing and mathematics. These changes support pupils to revisit aspects of learning that they need to practise. For example, the teaching of grammar and punctuation rules has been prioritised. Teachers consider how to best develop pupils' understanding of what they are taught. For instance, teachers split up writing activities into smaller tasks. They aim to make online work more manageable for pupils.
- Subject leaders understand the limits to resources available to pupils working remotely. In light of this, leaders have adapted planning so that all pupils continue to receive an education in all subjects. Leaders have identified subject content which they think all pupils will benefit from learning on site. For example, in science, the work on electricity will now take place later in the year. This is because most pupils do not have resources at home to practise making circuits.
- The teaching of reading has improved further over the last year. Teachers now select ambitious texts which introduce pupils to new words and ideas. During the national restrictions, reading sessions have not been as regular as usual. To compensate, teachers have made available audio recordings of books for pupils. This is to encourage pupils to listen to stories at home.

However, some aspects of reading need development. For example, pupils do not have regular opportunities to change their reading books. Leaders plan to introduce more regular online reading sessions for weaker readers. These sessions will focus on developing pupils' reading fluency.

- Leaders' work to improve reading has been rightly focused on making sure that all pupils have the phonics knowledge to read accurately. Since the previous inspection, you introduced phonics teaching in all year groups. Staff have been trained to develop their expertise in phonics teaching. Teachers have checked all pupils' phonics knowledge and identified any gaps. Pupils who need extra help attend additional phonics groups. However, these sessions are not currently happening regularly. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND and weaker readers. Leaders intend to prioritise the introduction of live online phonics teaching for these pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has clear oversight of the provision for pupils with SEND. Parents and carers receive regular updates. They know how to contact the SENCo if they have questions or concerns. The school continues to work in partnership with external agencies. Meetings with parents and specialists are arranged in school and remotely. Consequently, the SENCo and staff have the information they need to plan for pupils' needs.
- Governance has gone through a period of turbulence over the last year. The governing body is now led well. Members are experienced and have a clear vision for the future. Governors have a more constructive relationship with school leaders than they did in the past. They provide growing challenge to leaders. For example, the governing body asked helpful questions about the effectiveness of leaders' plans for remote education.
- The school has maintained close links with the local authority. They continue to meet regularly. These meetings help to develop senior and middle leaders. Over the last year, the school has been an associate member of Vanguard Learning Trust. This partnership has helped staff to learn from effective practice within other schools. Leaders have accessed specialist support and expertise. For example, the school benefited significantly from the trust's guidance in setting up the technology used for remote education.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils and staff. We also met with those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority and the executive headteacher of the Vanguard Learning Trust. We discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during the third national lockdown.

We reviewed plans for remote learning, sampled pupils' work, visited phonics sessions taking place within the school and sampled recorded sessions for pupils receiving 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 Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector