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Claire Addis
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Addis

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Wellington Lions Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Heather Barraclough, 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 November 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

- You joined the school as executive headteacher in April 2019. The head of school and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2019. The person responsible for reading left at the end of the summer term 2020. The person responsible for writing is absent from school. The person responsible for mathematics returned in November 2020. The school's status has changed since the last section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement. The school became part of the Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust on 1 April 2020. A new local governing body was formed in September 2020. A new chair of governors was appointed in November 2020.
- Across the autumn term 2020, Year 1 experienced a short period of remote education.
- At the time of this inspection, 39% of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attend on site.
- Currently, there are two teaching assistants absent from school because of COVID-19.

Main findings

- When schools partially closed on 23 March 2020, you were in the middle of overhauling the teaching of phonics and reading. In addition, you were starting to develop the curriculum. Since then, you have considered carefully the best way to teach pupils, including children in Reception, both in school and at home. You have adopted a multi-media approach so that all pupils receive the same learning. Leaders have secured devices, such as laptops, for everyone who needs one. As a result, pupils can access education within the current circumstances.
- You retrained teachers and teaching assistants in the teaching of phonics during the summer term 2020. Teaching is more consistent and pupils are reading more fluently as a result. For those pupils who need to catch up, there are systems in place to make this happen.
- You appointed curriculum leaders in September 2020. They are new to this work. They are developing subject plans to make sure that pupils are taught the most important knowledge in the right order. English and mathematics planning is more advanced than in other subjects. Some of this work has halted while leaders have considered how to teach pupils remotely as well as in school. You have plans to continue to develop subjects in the future, with support from the trust's networks.
- Reading is a priority in school. The new lead for reading has made sure that books for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 match the letters and sounds that they know. For older pupils, there is a greater choice of books to support them in their learning.

- There is an established and experienced team of staff who support both disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, in school and when they are learning remotely. Communication with families is regular and much appreciated by parents. The welfare systems in place are of a very high standard.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has ensured that pupils with SEND are achieving well. She and the assistant SENCo support teachers in meeting pupils' needs very effectively. Pupils do well in the current circumstances, whether in school or at home.
- The chair of governors is new to post and it is too soon to measure the impact of his actions.
- The new multi-academy trust (MAT) leaders have provided effective support in a short space of time. They are providing risk assessments and ensuring that all health and safety measures are in place. The chief executive officer and other headteachers in the MAT work closely with you. This provides you with strong, collaborative support. Members of the leadership team receive valuable training and support in their new roles. The previous MAT provided welcome funding for devices such as laptops.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, staff and the chair of governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at subject plans and leadership documents. We watched video recordings of pupils reading to teachers and teachers introducing learning to pupils studying remotely.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Royal Wootton Bassett multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector