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Stella Formosa
Headteacher
Chesterton Primary School
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Dear Mrs Formosa

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Chesterton Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Jonathan Leonard, 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 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 September 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 the previous inspection, three new governors have been appointed to the local governing committee. The school is a member of the Collective Vision Trust.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately one sixth of pupils had to be educated remotely at some point. This included all of the pupils in Reception, and pupils from other year groups at different times, due to self-isolation.
- Two thirds of pupils are being educated at home. This includes all pupils with an education, health and care plan because their parents have decided to keep them at home. Almost all other vulnerable pupils and those requiring special educational support are attending on site.
- Currently, two members of staff are self-isolating and working from home. Leaders have given them clear roles in supporting remote learning.

Main findings

- You and your leadership team are taking appropriate action to make sure that all pupils, whether in school or learning remotely, are accessing a broad and balanced curriculum in the current circumstances. Pupils at home study the same curriculum as that offered in school.
- You have developed a clear plan for the delivery of remote learning. Pupils access a mixture of live and pre-recorded lessons through an online platform. Live lessons are offered twice a day and cover a range of subjects, including phonics and mathematics. Teachers provide prompt feedback to pupils on their work. The school provides devices to families who request them and the school ICT technician is available to help. Staff deliver paper work packs to some pupils. Telephone calls and home visits are used to find out why some pupils are not joining in. Teachers keep a close eye on who engages with remote learning, to help ensure that work set is completed.
- Since the last inspection, you have focused on developing the curriculum so that it is sequenced more coherently. Leaders have mapped out the crucial knowledge in each subject area. Teachers pinpoint opportunities for pupils to recap and retrieve learning from previous years. This work is more developed in subjects such as history and geography than, for example, in physical education and music. You and your subject leaders demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of how to plan and sequence a coherent curriculum.
- Leadership of the early years continues to improve as a result of your support. A programme to revise the curriculum in the early years is now in place. Staff have identified the key knowledge that children need to know in

readiness for Year 1. They are beginning to sequence this so that children are more prepared for the subjects they will study in key stage 1.

- Teachers plan the curriculum to minimise any gaps in pupils' knowledge that may arise due to the impact of COVID-19. You expect that, during this third national lockdown, pupils continue to have lessons that are well sequenced. However, this is not yet the case across the whole curriculum. You acknowledge that some leaders have not yet begun to analyse the content of lesson sequences to check that learning is built progressively.
- You prioritise reading as a way of unlocking the potential for pupils to learn in other subjects. Phonics is now taught systematically from Reception. Daily phonics lessons take place in school and online. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. They change their books regularly. Staff hear pupils read online. Pupils who read to an inspector remotely had positive attitudes to reading. They used their phonics effectively to read new words. Pupils who need support benefit from one-to-one reading sessions with an adult, whether they are in school or at home.
- The engagement of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is monitored closely. The special needs coordinator makes sure that the support pupils with SEND need is delivered either in school or remotely. Pupils attending school benefit from additional one-to-one support from adults. This is helping to make sure that pupils keep up and do not fall behind.
- Governors' virtual meetings are well attended. Governors evaluate the impact of leaders' actions. Governors talk with pupils about their learning and check that all pupils receive an education in the current circumstances.
- The school makes good use of external support. Subject specialists in the trust work effectively with staff to develop their subject knowledge. Links with an outstanding primary school support improvements in the early years and in the teaching of phonics. Leaders rightly focus on the key priorities.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, three other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, pupils, four members of staff and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

Inspectors also spoke to the leader responsible for remote education and discussed how this was organised. This included observing some recorded lessons and looking at curriculum plans. An inspector heard four pupils read.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Collective Vision Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector