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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 February 2021

Alison Wyld, Headteacher
Harmans Water Primary School
Wellington Drive
Harmans Water
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 9NE

Dear Mrs Wyld

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Harmans Water Primary School

Following my remote inspection with James Broadbridge, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in July 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

- The school has a falling roll, and there has been a restructure to reduce the size of the leadership team. The governing body has been strengthened with new members, who bring a range of relevant skills and experience.
- About one sixth of pupils had to self-isolate and be educated remotely during the autumn term, 2020. This included a class 'bubble' from each of Year 3 and Year 6.
- Around one fifth of pupils from Reception to Year 6 are currently being educated on site. These are vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. Nearly all pupils with education, health and care plans for their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are attending school. The Nursery class is fully open. However, some parents have chosen not to send their nursery-aged children to school during the current lockdown.
- At the time of this inspection, leaders were successfully managing a few staff absences due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Leaders are going to great lengths to provide an interesting, enjoyable and balanced education for pupils in the current circumstances. The headteacher's high expectations and drive for improvement have not been diminished by the current challenges. Leaders are making speedy progress towards overcoming the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, despite the pandemic.
- Relationships have strengthened, and the school has gone over and above what is required to support pupils and their families. This includes providing equipment, including technology, to support remote education and setting up a foodbank. Additional support is provided for pupils and parents who are finding learning at home difficult. This includes videos, emails and individual video calls. Staff also carry out regular checks on the welfare of pupils who are not attending school or who attend an alternative provision.
- Pupils working at home and those in school have equal access to the curriculum. This is because teachers are planning activities that are uploaded daily to a well-established learning platform and can be completed at home or in school. Children in Reception have received helpful resources to use at home, which they can use on the wide range of practical activities they have to complete with their family.
- In most subjects, teachers are rightly ploughing ahead with the planned curriculum to ensure that pupils get the education they deserve. Teachers have made sensible choices about the ordering of topics in some subjects. For example, in mathematics teachers have chosen to teach fractions later in the

year, when all pupils return to school and can receive extra support. Some topics, such as money in Year 2, have been brought forward as teachers feel parents can support pupils well in this area. Some practical aspects of subjects have been postponed because not everyone would have access to the materials needed, for example clay work in art. The curriculum in French and physical education is currently being reviewed and, as a result, pupils are currently being set a variety of work.

- Reading has continued to be prioritised. Pupils at an early stage of reading are continuing to make stronger progress in phonics than previous cohorts. In Reception, children are receiving two short video inputs a day to help them with their sounds and early writing skills. Teachers have assessed pupils in Year 1 individually via video call to ensure that they are receiving the right work in phonics to help them learn to read quickly. Leaders are continually developing this area of improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers who are attending school are receiving the same education and curriculum as those working remotely. Pupils with SEND are receiving suitable work in and out of school to support their learning. This is because teachers are thinking carefully about their needs and, where appropriate, they provide different tasks and resources to help pupils with SEND be successful.
- Governors have proactively checked on the well-being and welfare of staff and leaders throughout the pandemic. They are mindful of the pressures that are on the school at this time and how this has been exacerbated by changes to the leadership team. Governors offer practical support, using their skills and experience, to help ensure that the school operates safely both on site and online. Governors have maintained their expectations about the improvements they expect to see and are continuing to meet regularly and visit the school, mainly remotely, to check on the current provision.
- School leaders have valued the support of the local authority during the pandemic. The local authority has continued to monitor the progress of the school since the last inspection and is pleased with the progress made. They have confidence in the leadership capacity within the school. Since March 2020, the local authority has contacted the school weekly to check on provision for pupils and the welfare of leaders.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, three members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at samples of teachers' planning for remote education and pupils' completed work. We met remotely with some pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 and heard some Year 1 pupils read to a familiar adult.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector