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Mr James Ayton
Executive headteacher
Ramnoth Junior School
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Dear Mr Ayton

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Ramnoth Junior School

Following my remote inspection with Paul Wilson, 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 special measures.

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 require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection(s). The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 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 in 2019, there have been substantial changes in staffing. The head of school has been in place since September 2019. You started as executive headteacher in September 2020.
- Prior to the previous inspection, the multi-academy trust (the trust) dissolved the local governing body. Trustees oversee the school's work. The trust provided significant additional leadership capacity prior to the appointment of the permanent headteacher.
- In the autumn term 2020, about one fifth of pupils had to work away from school at some point.
- At the time of the inspection, about half of pupils are being educated on site. About two thirds of vulnerable pupils and two thirds of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are on site.

Main findings

- Senior leaders have ensured that every pupil can learn at home online or have a place in school. Leaders have set clear expectations about the amount of teaching all pupils will receive, and the work they will complete. Teachers give pupils feedback daily.
- Pupils are learning very similar things, whether they are at home or at school. Teachers and support staff use a variety of recorded videos to help teach pupils new content. Teachers adapt activities in English and mathematics to fit pupils' needs.
- You have continued to develop the curriculum since the previous inspection. Leaders have planned out what key knowledge pupils should learn in each subject each year. Teachers are beginning to use curriculum plans to check that pupils learn and remember the most important information. You are delaying some work that pupils were struggling to complete at home. Pupils are completing more grammar and sentence structure work that would usually be covered later in the year.
- Leaders make daily checks to see if pupils working at home are completing their learning. Teachers are quick to make contact if work is not completed. Some pupils who struggle with home working have been offered places in school.
- Reading has been a key focus for the school for some time. Leaders have continued with the improvements noted during the previous inspection. Books are matched to pupils' reading ability. Leaders have set up an outside library so families can collect books for pupils working at home. Pupils can also read appropriate electronic books.

- Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read have additional teaching sessions if they are in school. Those at home complete tasks that help to secure their existing phonics learning and learn new sounds.
- Pupils with SEND complete well-planned activities that meet their individual needs. Those pupils with an education, health and care plan who are not in school regularly are supported by the special needs coordinator and teaching assistants online.
- The 'Team Around the Academy' group provides challenge and support to school leaders. Trust leaders know the school well. They have directly monitored the quality of the school's home learning offer. School leaders report regularly to trust leaders on pupil engagement and access to remote provision, with a focus on those with SEND and/or those who are considered vulnerable. Trust leaders regularly survey parents to check on their opinions of the remote provision.
- The school has benefited from being part of the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area. School staff have had training in the teaching of phonics; middle leaders have taken part in leadership and subject-specific training.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders and the multi-academy trust chief executive officer. We also spoke with pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance. Our conversations focused upon leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We scrutinised the online classrooms and the work set and completed remotely. We spoke to pupils being taught on site. We considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 11 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, as well as eight comments submitted by parents.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Elliot Foundation Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tessa Holledge
Her Majesty's Inspector