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26 February 2021

Will Thompson  
Principal  
The Brittons Academy  
Ford Lane  
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Dear Mr Thompson

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Brittons Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Jasper Green, 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 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 July 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

- A new chair of the interim executive board (IEB) has been appointed since the school was last inspected.
- During the autumn term 2020, every pupil in the school experienced at least one week of remote education. Around a third of all pupils were educated remotely on at least three different occasions.
- At the time of this inspection, the vast majority of pupils were being educated remotely. Approximately 40% of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 10% of staff were absent due to COVID-19. Staff were being redeployed from within the school and the academy trust so that teaching continued for all pupils.

## Main findings

- During the third national lockdown, you and the leadership team have focused sharply on providing an education for all pupils. Leaders have worked hard to find solutions to the challenges that they have faced. All pupils have access to the same learning, whether on site or remotely.
- Before the pandemic, leaders were reviewing the content of their subjects and the order in which concepts are taught. Although the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 slowed down this process, it remains a key priority. The aim is to ensure completion of this work by the end of the current academic year. Leaders are finding ways of addressing gaps in pupils' learning by thinking more deeply about the links between different concepts.
- Subject leaders have made changes to curriculum content where it is clear that remote learning has its limits. For example, simulations have been used in science in place of actual experiments. In mathematics, the teaching of transformations has been delayed. However, leaders sometimes lack clarity about which specific parts of the curriculum pupils have learned or are struggling with. You reported that assessing pupils' knowledge has been a challenge during this time, especially when pupils are learning remotely. Leaders are currently working on improving this aspect of their work.
- Carefully thought-out plans for Year 11 pupils ensure that they have access to additional remote support and receive ongoing feedback. Leaders are keen to get pupils back on site as soon as possible, to deepen their learning further.
- Reading has been made a priority. A particular focus has been given to pupils who joined the school last September. Careful thought is given to the choice of texts for those taking part in online reading lessons. This includes vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. That said, more work is required to

show the full impact of the school's reading curriculum. This is because the new reading programmes have not had sufficient time to bed down.

- Since September 2019, more staff have been recruited to the inclusion team. This is clearly benefiting pupils with SEND, and those that are vulnerable. For instance, learning support assistants are providing additional support based on pupils' identified needs, both on site and in lessons taught remotely. This, coupled with regular checks on pupils' mental health and well-being, help to address barriers that pupils may have to learning.
- The IEB is holding you and the leadership team to account, using the targets identified in the school's improvement plan. Governors are looking at further adaptations to the way they monitor the quality of remote education. The IEB was instrumental in making sure that the school had the right technology to provide suitable remote learning for all pupils. This has been supported by appropriate training for staff and pupils. Parents, carers and pupils we spoke to told us that the new system is efficient and well organised.
- The trust's school effectiveness lead worked in school for two days per week during the autumn term 2020, along with three additional senior leaders seconded by the trust, full time. You believe that this has had a positive impact on improving the delivery of the curriculum and middle leadership, including through focused coaching and modelling of effective practice.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, members of the IEB and the chief executive officer of the Empower Learning Academy Trust (ELAT). Inspectors also met virtually with two groups of pupils and a small group of teachers. They held telephone discussions with six parents. These meetings were carried out to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

Inspectors also reviewed a small sample of live part-lessons that had been recorded, and scrutinised curriculum documentation provided by the school.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive officer of ELAT multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**