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Daniel Cowling
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cowling

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Oak Wood School

Following my remote inspection with Daniel-John Constable, 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 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. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- put a curriculum in place to teach reading to those pupils who join the school unable to decode and blend sounds.

Context

- You joined the school as headteacher in April 2020. You have appointed a new deputy headteacher, three new assistant headteachers and a business manager. A new governing body was created on 1 January 2021, replacing an interim executive board. The chair of the new governing body was previously the vice-chair of the interim executive board.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately one third of pupils experienced periods of remote education because of COVID-19. This affected all year groups. The biggest impact was on Year 8, with almost half of these pupils experiencing remote education during the autumn term.
- Approximately half of pupils with education, health and care plans and a fifth of vulnerable pupils were being educated on site.
- At the time of this inspection, leaders were not having to manage significant staff absence due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Since your arrival in April 2020, you have introduced a new online learning platform that allows pupils to access work when not in school. Pupils follow all their lessons online. They submit their work online and teachers give them feedback. Pupils who come to school during lockdown also access the online platform. Pupils are being provided with an education in the current circumstances.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have focused on developing the curriculum. With support from other schools and the local authority, subject leaders have written new plans. These plans help pupils to build step by step on what they already know. Changes in leadership and the pandemic mean that there is still some work to do in some subjects, such as history and geography. Leaders want changes to all subject areas to be completed before the start of term in September 2021. The sixth form is currently quite small, but leaders plan to expand this over the next five years. There are already a healthy number of applications for September 2021.
- Leaders and teachers are providing education on site for vulnerable pupils. These pupils access the same online work as pupils working at home. Leaders have worked with families to identify the best way to support vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have adapted the way in which pupils access their education

depending on their needs. For example, some pupils are in school as this is the best way for teachers to support them. Other pupils prefer to work from home. Leaders have provided these pupils with devices or, if they prefer, paper packs.

- Leaders have quickly developed a culture of reading in the school. Pupils read during form time and all teachers ensure pupils learn the key vocabulary in their subjects. Leaders have not put in place a systematic approach to supporting pupils who are unable to decode words when they arrive at the school. These pupils find it hard to read the materials given in their lessons.
- Plans are in place to support pupils in Years 11 and 13 who are due to finish school this year. Both these year groups are quite small and the heads of year have been able to provide personalised support. Year 11 pupils receive support to apply to the school sixth form or other schools and colleges. The majority of Year 13 students have completed their university applications.
- Leaders have carefully considered the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils can learn on site or at home, and this is personalised to the needs of pupils. For pupils working at home, extra sessions are organised online and all pupils with SEND receive additional support with their work from teaching assistants.
- The governing body of the school was only recently formed, yet there is already a good working relationship between it and the headteacher. The chair has a good understanding of curriculum development in the school and has been supportive of the headteacher in his strategy to improve behaviour. Minutes of the first meeting of the governing body and the headteacher's report show that information is shared effectively. The chair has supported leaders in making sure all pupils have access to devices to take part in online lessons.
- Following the last inspection in 2018, leaders received support from the interim executive board, the local authority and partnerships with other schools. This support was helpful in bringing about the first stage of curriculum development. The local authority officer is now working with subject leaders to continue improvements.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

Inspectors also carried out visits to remote lessons and scrutinised pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector