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Sarah Hartshorn
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Dear Ms Hartshorn

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of King Edward VII Academy

Following my remote inspection with Cindy Impey, 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 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 September 2019, eight members of staff have left and four newly qualified teachers and two assistant headteachers have joined the school. Two members of staff have been promoted to the senior leadership team. Currently, an interim chief executive officer (CEO) leads the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust until a substantive appointment is made later this year.
- During the autumn term 2020, just over one third of pupils were asked to isolate at home. These were mostly pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were being educated at home. Thirty-seven pupils were being taught on site. These were children of key workers, or are known to be vulnerable. A very small proportion of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attend on site.

Main findings

- You provide staff with a clear vision for the school's improvement. Prompt action and regular training have ensured that staff feel 'ahead of the game' in providing remote education for pupils. Staff have acted quickly since the start of this term to maintain pupils' learning during the current lockdown.
- Since the previous section 5 inspection, improving the curriculum has been a top priority. Subject leaders have used their time effectively during the previous lockdown to develop the curriculum further. Improved curriculum plans in all subjects are in place. Your governors support the decision to teach the usual curriculum to enable pupils to continue their studies at home. Some changes have been necessary in some subjects. For example, in mathematics staff feel that using protractors and compasses cannot be taught until pupils return to school. The teaching of some practical tasks in design technology and music have also been postponed. These aspects will be taught once all pupils return to school.
- Remote learning is under way for all year groups. You have checked to see that all pupils have suitable devices to engage in learning at home. Trustees have contributed well to this by funding new laptops for some pupils. Pupils currently attending school learn in the same way through live, online lessons. Those pupils who spoke with inspectors commented favourably on the work provided for them.
- In the sixth form, learning is taught remotely in 'live' lessons. Students who spoke with inspectors said that this is working well. Your leaders have stressed to Year 13 students that this year is very much 'business as usual'. Applications to higher education settings and apprenticeships have been completed.
- In key stage 4, English, mathematics and science lessons are also taught online. In other subjects, pupils have a mixture of live lessons and tasks to

complete by themselves. Inspectors' scrutiny of a small sample of online lessons confirmed that pupils are engaging well in their learning. Year 11 pupils have sat mock examinations in English, mathematics and science. This term, leaders of other subjects are assessing pupils to gain a clear overview of how well they are doing.

- Your monitoring shows that the large majority of pupils are logging on regularly to follow their normal timetables. Remote learning includes a daily tutorial which helps to promote pupils' personal, social and health education. Pastoral staff monitor pupils' attendance and engagement and alert support staff to pupils showing signs of concern.
- Improved procedures to support pupils with SEND are in place. These pupils follow the usual curriculum; however, they are given a key worker to support them. Key workers remain in daily contact with pupils in their care through email and have an online, face-to-face meeting with them each week to discuss their learning and welfare. Your leader responsible for pupils with SEND works with external agencies to promote pupils' social, emotional and mental health.
- Year 7 pupils received an extra lesson in English last term which helped them to catch up with their reading and writing. Less-able readers are identified early and have one-to-one support with their reading. These sessions help them to improve their reading through regular practice, but do not ensure that they secure the phonetic understanding needed to tackle new and unfamiliar words. Pupils who met with inspectors said that they do not read books in their own time. You acknowledge that more needs to be done to promote pupils' reading.
- Your trustees and governors feel that the regular information you give them about the school ensures that they understand the actions you are taking. They provide effective support and hold you and other leaders accountable. They are working with a national leader of education and an external provider to validate the quality of the school's work.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with you and your senior and middle leaders. We talked with other staff, a group of pupils and representatives of the academy trust, the academy council and foundation trustees to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also sampled a range of recorded online lessons to observe pupils learning remotely, at home.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the interim CEO of the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, the chair of the academy council, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector