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Alison Bailey  
Executive Headteacher  
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PE14 7QQ

Dear Ms Bailey

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Walpole Highway Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Charlie Fordham, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 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 at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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.**

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

- make sure that teaching plans across all subjects, in every year group, identify the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember
- deepen governors' knowledge and understanding of how the curriculum in all subjects is planned and taught by leaders and staff.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, both the staff team and the governing body have largely remained the same. In September 2020, an experienced governor took on the role of chair of the governing body.
- During the autumn term 2020, no pupils had to be educated remotely.
- At the time of the inspection, approximately 90% of pupils were being educated at home. Leaders had given all pupils the opportunity to learn in school during the third national lockdown. Parental choice and the very small take-up meant that pupils were only on site on Thursdays and Fridays. Almost all pupils in school for these two days were children of critical workers.

## **Main findings**

- Since the previous inspection, you and your leaders have focused on developing and improving the school's curriculum. The restrictions due to COVID-19 have limited some of this improvement. Governors and subject leaders (who work across the four schools within the Windmill federation), have been unable to carry out their roles fully. Leaders have only been able to make limited checks on how effectively the school's intended curriculum plans are being taught in each subject.
- The pandemic has also slowed the pace at which you and your leaders have been able to improve the school's curriculum plans. In most subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn and remember in each year group, so that pupils can build on what they have learned before.
- In autumn 2020, you and your leaders planned how to deliver the curriculum remotely for pupils. This term, teachers are providing recorded lessons together with online and paper-based resources for pupils to learn across all subjects. The usual curriculum is in place apart from some practical aspects of science that have been moved to later in the term. Teachers assess the work that pupils complete online and provide them with swift, regular and helpful feedback. You have offered devices to pupils who would not otherwise have access to them. Some parents and carers prefer their children to work using paper-based resources. It is taking longer for these pupils to review teachers' feedback on their work.

- You and your leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. You have chosen to teach other subjects through topics planned around high-quality texts. Pupils at the early stages of reading have recorded phonics lessons. They complete related activities that demonstrate what they have learned. Teachers provide online resources to help parents know how to pronounce sounds correctly. This enables parents to support their children when practising phonics at home. You are continuing to encourage pupils to read for their own enjoyment. Teachers record daily story sessions for their pupils.
- Leaders have made sure that the most vulnerable pupils receive additional support to continue learning at home. Teachers check that these pupils join online lessons and the quality of the work that pupils complete. Staff make regular contact with the families and offer extra support if needed. This helps some pupils to complete their work positively.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with staff to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Well-structured and personalised support is put in place and monitored closely to help these pupils achieve well. Pupils with SEND are engaging in remote learning successfully.
- Governors have made regular checks on pupils' and staff well-being. Following the external review of governance in June 2019, governors have been working more closely with you and your leaders. This is increasing governors' understanding of leaders' actions and how these are improving the school. However, governors do not understand the design and content of your chosen curriculum. This is limiting governors' ability to hold you and your leaders to account for pupils' academic achievement in all subjects.
- You have maintained regular contact with the school's local authority adviser. Leaders and governors have benefited from training and guidance to provide remote education. Last year, you and your leaders began working with a local teaching school to develop and improve the reading curriculum. This support has been on hold due to COVID-19.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, and your assistant headteachers, one of whom is also the SENCo, several subject leaders, teachers, support staff, five governors including the chair of the governing body, and a local authority adviser. Discussions focused on leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also scrutinised curriculum progression documents, the school's website, online teaching resources, minutes of governing body meetings and reports of governors' monitoring visits. We considered two free-text responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and reviewed the eight responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. Additionally, we observed pupils reading to school staff and held telephone conversations with some parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**